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THE SAINT'S Everlasting REST:

OR, A

TREATISE

OF THE

Blessed State of the SAINTS

In their Enjoyment of

GOD in HEAVEN.

Written by the Reverend, Learned and Holy

MR. *RICHARD BAXTER.*

ABRIDGED

By *BENJAMIN FAWCETT.*

I think it of great Service to the Souls of Men, to call them to the Notice and Use of such a Treatise as this; and to bring such old and excellent Writings out of Oblivion and the Dust.

Baxter's Preface to *Scudder's* Christian's Daily Walk.

SALOP:

Printed by J. COTTON, and J. EDMOWES;

And sold by J. BUCKLAND, at the *Buck*, in *Pater-noster-Row*; T. FIELD, at the *Wheat-Sheaf*, the Corner of *Pater-noster-Row*, *Cheapside*; and E. DILLY, at the *Rose and Crown*, in the *Poultry*, *London*.

MDCCLIX.

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TO THE

INHABITANTS

OF THE

BOROUGH AND FOREIGN

OF

KIDDERMINSTER,

Both MAGISTRATES and PEOPLE.

My dear Friends,

THERE are obvious Reasons for prefixing your Names to this Book. It contains the Substance of what was first preached in your Parish-Church, and was first published from the Press with a Dedication to your worthy Ancestors. Your

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Trade and Manufactures can never render your Town so famous, as the Name and Writings of Mr. *Baxter* have already made it, both in this Island, and in many remote Parts of the Protestant World. His intimate and important Relation to *Kidderminster*, and the Years he abode in it, afforded him the most delightful Reflection as long as he lived.

LONG Experience has enabled me to testify for you, that, notwithstanding your Share in those common Distinctions which so unhappily divide Fellow-Protestants, you possess a most unusual Degree of Candor and Friendship for each other. Thus you shew, that *Kidderminster* has not totally lost the amiable Spirit which it imbibed more than a Century ago.

THERE are no Excellencies personal or relative, no Species of domestick or publick Happiness, no Beauties of civil or religious Life, but what will be naturally promoted by a Care to secure to ourselves an Interest in the *Rest which remaineth to the People of God*. They are the People for whom alone that Rest is designed, both by the Promises of God, and by the Purchase of the Son of God. A Care to secure

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cure that Reſt to ourſelves, is *the one Thing needful*. But neither this People, nor this Care, you well know, are the Peculiarities of any Age, or of any Party. If the Inhabitants of *Kidderminſter* formerly excelled in this Care, you muſt allow, it was their greateſt Glory. And *this*, more than any Improvements of Trade, or increaſing Elegancies of Life, will be the greateſt Glory of their Succeſſors.

To excite this Care, is the nobleſt Deſign of all religious Inſtruction. This, and nothing elſe, animates the following Pages. Here, God and Chriſt, Heaven and Holineſs, invite your moſt attentive and affectionate Regards. Here, you may peruſe, what Multitudes in the ſame Town have heard and read before you to their everlaſting Joy, till *your Bleſſings prevail above the Bleſſings of your Progenitors*. Here, by the Help of divine Grace, you may learn the heavenly Art of walking with God below, of living in a conſtant View and Foretaſte of the Glories of the *new Jeruſalem*, and of making all you ſay or do, ſuffer or enjoy, ſubſervient to the brightening your immortal Crown.——Nothing has the Compiler of this Abridgment to wiſh like ſuch Conſequences

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sequences as these; even, to see the same holy and heavenly Conversation in himself, and in those around him, now, as Mr. *Baxter* saw in his Day. This would be the greatest Joy, and shall be the constant and fervent Prayer, of

Your affectionate Friend,

And obedient Servant,

B. FAWCETT.

Kidderminster,
Jan. 1, 1759.

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THE PREFACE,

By the COMPILER of this ABRIDGMENT.

MR. *Richard Baxter*, the Author of the *Saints Reſt*, ſo well known to the World by this, and many other excellent and uſeful Writings, was a learned, laborious, and eminently holy Divine of the laſt Age. He was born near *Shrewſbury* in 1615, and died at *London* in 1691.

His *Miniſtry*, in an unſettled State, was for many Years employed with great and extenſive Succeſs, both in *London*, and in ſeveral Parts of the Country; but he was no where fixed ſo long, or with ſuch entire Satisfaction to himſelf, and apparent Advantage to others, as at *Kidderminſter*. His Abode there was indeed interrupted, partly by his bad Health, but chiefly by the Calamities of a civil War, yet in the whole it amounted to *ſixteen Years*; nor was it by any Means the Reſult of his own Choice, or that of the Inhabitants of *Kidderminſter*, that he never ſettled there again, after his going from thence in 1660. Before his coming thither, the Place was overrun

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with Ignorance and Profaneneſs; but, by a divine Bleſſing on his wiſe and faithful Cultivation, the Fruits of Righteouſneſs ſprung up in a rich Abundance. He at firſt found but a ſingle Inſtance or two of *daily Family Prayer* in a whole Street, and at his going away, but one Family or two could be found in ſome Streets that continued to neglect it. And on *Lord's Days*, inſtead of the open Profanation to which they had been ſo long accuſtomed, a Perſon, in paſſing thro' the Town, in the Intervals of publick Worſhip, might overhear hundreds of Families engaged in ſinging Pſalms, reading the Scriptures, and other good Books, or ſuch Sermons as they had wrote down, while they heard them from the Pulpit. His Care of the Souls committed to his Charge, and the Succeſs of his Labours among them, were truly remarkable; for the Number of his ſtated Communicants roſe to *ſix hundred*, of whom, he himſelf declared, there were not *twelve* concerning whoſe ſincere Piety he had not Reaſon to entertain good Hopes. Bleſſed be God, the religious Spirit which was thus happily introduced, is yet to be traced in the Town and Neighbourhood in ſome Degree; (O that it were in a greater!) and in Proportion as that Spirit remains, the Name of Mr. *Baxter* continues in the moſt honourable and affectionate Remembrance.

As a *Writer*, he has the Approbation of ſome of his greateſt Cotemporaries, who beſt knew him, and were under no Temptations to be partial in his Favour.——Dr. *Barrow* ſaid, "His practical Writings "were never mended, and his controverſial ones ſel- "dom confuted."——With a View to his caſuiſtical Writings, the Honourable *Robert Boyle*, Eſq; declared, "He was the fitteſt Man of the Age for a Caſuiſt, "becauſe he feared no Man's Diſpleaſure, nor hoped "for any Man's Preferment."——Biſhop *Wilkins* obſerved

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ſerved of him, " that he had cultivated every Subject " he had handled; that if he had lived in the primi- " tive Times, he would have been one of the Fathers " of the Church; and that it was enough for one " Age to produce ſuch a Perſon as Mr. *Baxter*."—— Archbiſhop *Uſher* had ſuch high Thoughts of him, that by his earneſt Importunity he put him upon writing ſeveral of his practical Diſcourſes, particularly that celebrated Piece, his *Call to the Unconverted*.—— Dr. *Manton*, as he freely expreſſed it, " thought Mr. " *Baxter* came nearer the apoſtolical Writings than " any Man in the Age."——And it is both as a *Preacher*, and a *Writer*, that Dr. *Bates* conſiders him, when, in his funeral Sermon for him, he ſays, " In his Sermons there was a rare Union of Argu- " ments and Motives, to convince the Mind, and " gain the Heart. All the Fountains of Reaſon and " Perſuaſion were open to his diſcerning Eye. There " was no reſiſting the Force of his Diſcourſes, with- " out denying Reaſon and divine Revelation. He " had a marvellous Facility and Copiouſneſs in ſpeak- " ing. There was a noble Negligence in his Stile, " for his great Mind could not ſtoop to the affected " Eloquence of Words; he deſpiſed flaſhy Oratory; " but his Expreſſions were clear and powerful, ſo " convincing the Underſtanding, ſo entering into the " Soul, ſo engaging the Affections, that thoſe were " as deaf as Adders who were not charmed by ſo " wiſe a Charmer. He was animated with the Holy " Spirit, and breathed celeſtial Fire, to inſpire Heat " and Life into dead Sinners, and to melt the Obdu- " rate in their frozen Tombs.——His Books, for " their Number, [which it ſeems was more than " one hundred and twenty,] and Variety of Matter " in them, make a Library.——They contain a

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" Treasure of controversial, casuistical, and practical " Divinity.——His Books of practical Divinity have " been effectual for more numerous Conversions of " Sinners to God, than any printed in our Time; " and, while the Church remains on Earth, will be " of continual Efficacy to recover lost Souls. There " is a vigorous Pulse in them, that keeps the Reader " awake and attentive."——To these Testimonies may not improperly be added that of the Editors of his *practical Works* in four Folio Volumes; in the Preface to which they say, " Perhaps there are no " Writings among us that have more of a true " Christian Spirit, a greater Mixture of Judgment " and Affection, or a greater Tendency to revive " pure and undefiled Religion; that have been more " esteemed abroad, or more blessed at home, for the " awakening the Secure, instructing the Ignorant, " confirming the Wavering, comforting the De- " jected, recovering the Prophane, or improving such " as are truly serious, than the practical Works of " this Author."——Such were the Apprehensions of eminent Persons, who were well acquainted with Mr. *Baxter* and his Writings. It is therefore the less remarkable that Mr. *Addison*, from an accidental and very imperfect Acquaintance, but with his usual Pleasantness and Candour, should mention the following Incident; " I once met with a Page of Mr. *Baxter*. " Upon the Perusal of it, I conceived so good an " Idea of the Author's Piety, that I bought the whole " Book."

WHATEVER other Causes might concur, it must chiefly be ascribed to Mr. *Baxter*'s distinguishing Reputation as a Preacher, and a Writer, that presently after the *Restoration* he was appointed one of the *Chaplains in Ordinary* to King *Charles* II, and preached

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once before him in that Capacity; as also that he had an Offer made him by the Lord Chancellor *Clarendon*, of the *Bishoprick of Hereford*, which, in a respectful Letter to his Lordship, he saw proper to decline.

THE *Saints Rest* is deservedly esteemed one of the most valuable Parts of his practical Works. He wrote it when he was far from Home, without any Book to consult but his *Bible*, and in such an ill State of Health, as to be in continual Expectation of Death for many Months; and therefore, merely for his own Use, he fixed his Thoughts on this heavenly Subject, "which "(says he) hath more benefitted me than all the "Studies of my Life." At this Time he could be little more than thirty Years old. He afterward preached over the Subject in his weekly Lecture at *Kidderminster*, and in 1650 he published it; and indeed it appears to have been the first that ever he published of all his practical Writings. Of this Book Dr. *Bates* says, "It was written by him when lan- "guishing in the Suspense of Life and Death, but "has the Signatures of his holy and vigorous Mind. "To *allure our Desires*, he unvails the Sanctuary "above, and discovers the Glories and Joys of the "Blessed in the divine Presence, by a Light so strong "and lively, that all the glittering Vanities of this "World vanish in that Comparison, and a sincere "Believer will despise them, as one of mature Age "does the Toys and Baubles of Children. To *excite* "*our Fear*, he removes the Skreen, and makes the "everlasting Fire of Hell so visible, and represents "the tormenting Passions of the Damned in those "dreadful Colours, that, if duly considered, would "check and controul the unbridled licentious Appe- "tites of the most sensual Wretches."

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HEAVENLY Rest is a Subject, in its own Nature, so universally important and interesting, and at the same Time so truly engaging and delightful, as sufficiently accounts for the great Acceptance which this Book has met with; and partly also for the uncommon Blessing which has attended Mr. *Baxter*'s Manner of treating the Subject, both from the Pulpit, and the Press. For where are the Operations of divine Grace more reasonably to be expected, or where have they in Fact been more frequently discerned, than in Concurrence with the best adapted Means? And should it appear, that Persons of distinguishing Judgment and Piety, have expressly ascribed their first religious Impressions to the hearing or reading the important Sentiments contained in this Book; or, after a long Series of Years, have found it, both the Counterpart, and the Improvement, of their own divine Life, will not this be thought a considerable Recommendation of the Book itself?

AMONG the Instances of Persons that dated their true Conversion from hearing the Sermons on the *Saints Rest*, when Mr. *Baxter* first preached them, was the Rev. Mr. *Thomas Doolittle*, M. A. who was a Native of *Kidderminster*, and at that Time a Scholar, about seventeen Years old; whom Mr. *Baxter* himself afterwards sent to *Pembroke-Hall*, in *Cambridge*, where he took his Degree. Before his going to the University, he was upon Trial as an Attorney's Clerk, and under that Character, being ordered by his Master to write something on a *Lord's Day*, he obeyed with great Reluctance, and the next Day returned home, with an earnest Desire that he might not apply himself to any Thing, as the Employment of Life, but serving Christ in the Ministry of the Gospel. His Praise is yet in the Churches, for his pious and useful Labours, as a Minister, a Tutor, and a Writer.

IN

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In the Life of the Rev. Mr. *John Janeway*, *Fellow of King's College, Cambridge*, who died in 1657, we are told, that his Converſion was, in a great Meaſure, occaſioned by his reading ſeveral Parts of the *Saints Reſt*. And in a Letter which he afterwards wrote to a near Relative, ſpeaking with a more immediate Reference to that Part of the Book which treats of *heavenly Contemplation*, he ſays, "There is a "Duty, which, if it were exercifed, would diſpel all "Cauſe of Melancholy; I mean, heavenly Medita"tion, and Contemplation of the Things which true "Chriſtian Religion tends to. If we did but walk "cloſely with God one Hour in a Day in this Duty, "oh, what Influence would it have upon the whole "Day beſides, and, duly performed, upon the whole "Life! This Duty, with its Uſefulneſs, Manner, "and Directions, I knew in ſome Meaſure before, "but had it more preſſed upon me by Mr. *Baxter's* "*Saints everlaſting Reſt*, [a Book] that can ſcarce "be over-valued, for which I have Cauſe for ever to "bleſs God."——This excellent young Miniſter's Life is worth reading, were it only to ſee how delightfully he was engaged in heavenly Contemplation, according to the Directions in the *Saints Reſt*.

It was the *Example of heavenly Contemplation*, at the Cloſe of this Book, which the Rev. Mr. *Joſeph Alleine*, of *Taunton*, ſo frequently quoted in Converſation, with this ſolemn Introduction, "Moſt di"vinely ſays that Man of God, holy Mr. *Baxter*."

Dr. *Bate*, in his Dedication of his funeral Sermon for Mr. *Baxter* to Sir *Henry Aſhurſt*, Bart. tells that religious Gentleman, and moſt diſtinguiſhed Friend and Executor of Mr. *Baxter*, "He was moſt worthy of "your higheſt Eſteem and Love; for the firſt Im"preſſions of Heaven upon your Soul, were in reading "his invaluable Book of the *Saints everlaſting Reſt*."

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IN the Life of the Rev. Mr. *Matthew Henry*, we have the following Character given us of *Robert Warburton*, Esq; of *Grange*, the Son of the eminently religious Judge *Warburton*, and the Father of Mr. *Matthew Henry*'s second Wife, "He was a Gentleman that greatly affected Retirement and Privacy, especially in the latter Part of his Life; the *Bible*, and Mr. *Baxter's Saints everlasting Rest*, used to lie daily before him on the Table in his Parlour; he spent the greatest Part of his Time in reading and Prayer."

IN the Life of that honourable and most religious Knight, Sir *Nathaniel Barnardiston*, we are told, "that he was constant in secret Prayer and reading the Scriptures; afterwards he read other choice Authors: But not long before his Death he took singular Delight to read Mr. *Baxter's Saints everlasting Rest*, and Preparation thereunto; which was esteemed a gracious Event of divine Providence, sending it as a Guide to bring him more speedily and directly to that Rest."

BESIDES Persons of Eminence, to whom this Book has been precious and profitable, we have an Instance, in the Rev. Mr. *James Janeway's Token for Children*, of a little Boy, whose Piety was so discovered and promoted by reading it, as the most delightful Book to him next the *Bible*, that the Thoughts of everlasting Rest seemed, even while he continued in Health, to swallow up all other Thoughts; and he lived in a constant Preparation for it, and looked more like one that was ripe for Glory, than an Inhabitant of this lower World. And when he was in the Sickness of which he died, before he was twelve Years old, he said, "I pray, let me have Mr. *Baxter*'s Book, that "I may read a little more of Eternity, before I go "into it."

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NOR is it less observable, that Mr. *Baxter* himself, taking Notice, in a Paper found in his Study after his Death, what Numbers of Persons were converted by reading his *Call to the Unconverted*, Accounts of which he had received by Letter every Week, expressly adds, "This little Book [the *Call to the Unconverted*] God hath blessed with unexpected Success, beyond all that I have written, *except the Saints Rest.*" With an evident Reference to this Book, and even during the Life of the Author, the pious Mr. *Flavell* affectionately says, "Mr. *Baxter* is almost in Heaven; living in the daily Views, and chearful Expectation of *the Saints everlasting Rest with God*; and is left for a little while among us, as a great Example of the Life of Faith."——And Mr. *Baxter* himself says, in his Preface to his *Treatise of Self-Denial*, "I must say, that of all the Books which I have written, I peruse none so often for the Use of my own Soul in its daily Work, as my *Life of Faith*, this of *Self-Denial*, and the last Part of the *Saint's Rest.*"——On the whole, it is not without good Reason that Dr. *Calamy* remarks concerning it, "This is a Book, for which Multitudes will have Cause to bless God for ever."

THIS excellent and useful Book now appears in the Form of an Abridgement; and therefore, it is presumed, will be the more likely, under a divine Blessing, to diffuse its salutary Influence among those that would otherwise have wanted Opportunity or Inclination to read over the larger Volume. In reducing it to this smaller Size, I have been very desirous to do Justice to the *Author*, and at the same Time promote the Pleasure and Profit of the serious *Reader*. And, I hope, those Ends are, in some Measure, answered; chiefly by dropping Things of a digressive.

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digreſſive, controverſial, or metaphyſical Nature; together with Prefaces, Dedications; and various Alluſions to ſome peculiar Circumſtances of the laſt Age; and particularly, by throwing ſeveral Chapters into one, that the Number of them may better correſpond with the Size of the Volume; and ſometimes by altering the Form, but not the Senſe, of a Period, for the Sake of Brevity; and when an obſolete Phraſe occurred, changing it for one more common and intelligible. I ſhould never have thought of attempting this Work, if it had not been ſuggeſted and urged by others; and by ſome very reſpectable Names, of whoſe Learning, Judgment, and Piety, I forbear to avail myſelf. However defective this Performance may appear, the Labour of it (if it may be called a Labour) has been, I bleſs God, one of the moſt delightful Labours of my Life.

CERTAINLY the Thoughts of *everlaſting Reſt* may be as delightful to Souls in the preſent Day, as they have ever been to thoſe of paſt Generations. I am ſure ſuch Thoughts are as abſolutely neceſſary now; nor are Temptations to neglect them, either fewer, or weaker, now than formerly. The Worth of everlaſting Reſt is not felt, becauſe it is not conſidered; it is forgotten, becauſe a thouſand Trifles are preferred before it. But were the divine Reaſonings of this Book duly attended to, (and oh that the Spirit and Grace of a Redeemer may make them ſo!) then an Age of Vanity would become ſerious; Minds, enervated by Senſuality, would ſoon reſume the Strength of Reaſon, and diſplay the Excellence of Chriſtianity; the deluſive Names of Pleaſure would be blotted out, by the glorious Reality of heavenly Joy upon Earth; every Station and Relation in Life would be filled up with the Propriety and Dignity of

ſerious

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ſerious Religion; every Member of Society would then effectually contribute to the Beauty and Happineſs of the whole; and every Soul would be ready for Life or Death, for one World or another, in a well-grounded and chearful Perſuaſion of having ſecured a Title to that *Reſt which remaineth to the People of God.*

B. F.

Kidderminſter,
Dec. 25. 1753.

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and Discoveries of a spiritual and eternal Happiness and Glory, he finds not Faith in Man to believe it. As the poor Man, that would not believe any one had such a Sum as an hundred Pounds, it was so far above what himself possessed; so Men will hardly *now* believe there is such a Happiness as *once* they had, much less as Christ hath now procured. When God would give the *Israelites* his Sabbaths of Rest, in a Land of Rest, he had more ado to make them believe it, than to overcome their Enemies, and procure it for them. And when they had it, only as a small Intimation and Earnest of an incomparably more glorious Rest thro' Christ, they yet believe no more than they possess, but say, with the Glutton at the Feast, *Sure there's no other Heaven but this.* Or, if they expect more by the *Messiah*, it is only the Increase of their earthly Felicity. The *Apostle* bestows most of this *Epistle* against this Distemper, and clearly and largely proves, that the End of all Ceremonies and Shadows, is to direct them to Jesus Christ the Substance; and that the *Rest* of *Sabbaths*, and *Canaan*, should teach them to look for a farther Rest, which indeed is their Happiness. My Text is his Conclusion, after divers Arguments; a Conclusion, which contains the Ground of all the Believer's Comfort, the End of all his Duty and Sufferings, the Life and Sum of all Gospel-Promises and *Christian* Privileges. What more welcome to Men, under personal Afflictions, tireing Duties, Successions of Sufferings, than Rest? It is not our Comfort only, but our Stability. Our Liveliness in all Duties, our enduring Tribulation, our honouring of God, the Vigor of our Love, Thankfulness, and all our Graces; yea, the very Being of our Religion and Christianity, depend on the *believing serious Thoughts of our Rest.* And now, *Reader*, whatever thou art, young or old, rich or poor, I intreat thee,

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thee, and charge thee, in the Name of thy Lord, who will shortly call thee to a Reckoning, and judge thee to thy everlasting unchangeable State, that thou give not these Things the Reading only, and so dismiss them with a bare Approbation; but that thou set upon this Work, and take God in Christ for thy only Rest, and fix thy Heart upon him above all. May the living God, who is the Portion and Rest of his Saints, make these our carnal Minds so spiritual, and our earthly Hearts so heavenly, that loving him, and delighting in him, may be the Work of our Lives; and that neither I that write, nor you that read, this Book, may ever be turned from this Path of Life; *lest a Promise being left us of entering into his Rest, we should come short of it*, thro' our own Unbelief or Negligence (a)!

§ 2. THE *Saint's Rest* is, "the most happy State "of a Christian;" or it is, "the perfect endless En- "joyment of God by the perfected Saints, according "to the Measure of their Capacity, to which their "Souls arrive at Death, and both Soul and Body "most fully after the Resurrection and final Judg- "ment." According to this Definition of the *Saint's Rest*, a larger Account of its *Nature* will be given in *this Chapter*; of its *Preparatives (Chap. 2)*; its *Excellencies (Chap. 3)*; and *(Chap. 4) the Persons for whom it is designed.* Farther to illustrate the Subject, some Description will be given *(Chap. 5)* of *their Misery who lose this Rest*, and *(Chap. 6) who also lose the Enjoyments of Time, and suffer the Torments of Hell:* Next will be shewed *(Chap. 7) the Necessity of diligently seeking this Rest*; *(Chap. 8) how our Title to it may be discerned*; *(Chap. 9)* that *they who discern their Title to it should help those that cannot*; and *(Chap. 10)* that *this Rest is not to be expected on Earth.* It will

(a) Heb. iv. 1.

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then be proper to consider *(Chap.* 11) *the Importance of a heavenly Life upon Earth*; *(Chap.* 12) *how to live a heavenly Life upon Earth*; *(Chap.* 13) *the Nature of heavenly Contemplation, with the Time, Place, and Temper fittest for it*; *(Chap.* 14) *what Use heavenly Contemplation makes of Consideration, Affections, Soliloquy, and Prayer*; and likewise *(Chap.* 15) *how heavenly Contemplation may be assisted by sensible Objects, and guarded against a treacherous Heart. Heavenly Contemplation* will be *exemplified, (Chap.* 16) *and the whole Work concluded.*

§ 3. THERE are *some Things necessarily presupposed in the Nature of this Rest*; as for Instance,——that *mortal Men are the Persons seeking it.* For Angels and glorified Spirits have it already, and the Devils and Damned are past Hope.——That *they chuse God only for their End and Happiness.* He that takes any Thing else for his Happiness, is out of the Way the first Step.——That *they are distant from this End.* This is the woeful Case of all Mankind since the Fall. When Christ comes with regenerating Grace, he finds no Man sitting still, but all posting to eternal Ruin, and making haste towards Hell; till, by Conviction, he first brings them to a Stand, and then, by Conversion, turns their Hearts and Lives sincerely to himself.——*This End, and its Excellency, is* supposed to be *known, and seriously intended.* An unknown Good moves not to desire or endeavour.——And not only a Distance from this Rest, but *the true Knowledge of this Distance*, is also supposed. They that never yet knew they were without God, and in the Way to Hell, did never yet know the Way to Heaven. Can a Man find he hath lost his God, and his Soul, and not cry out, *I am undone?* The Reason why so few obtain this Rest, is, they will not be convinced that they are, in Point of Title, distant from it; and, in

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in Point of Practice, contrary to it. Who ever sought for that, which he knew not he had lost? *They that be whole need not a Physician, but they that are sick* (b). —*The Influence of a superior moving Cause* is also supposed; else we shall all stand still, and not move toward our Rest. If God move us not, we cannot move. It is a most necessary Part of our Christian Wisdom, to keep our Subordination to God, and Dependance on him. *We are not sufficient of ourselves to think any Thing as of ourselves, but our Sufficiency is of God* (c). *Without me*, says Christ, *ye can do nothing* (d). —It is next supposed, that *they, who seek this Rest, have an inward Principle of spiritual Life.* God does not move Men like Stones, but he endows them with Life, not to enable them to move without him, but in Subordination to himself the first Mover.—And farther, this Rest supposes *such an actual Tendency of Soul towards it, as is regular and constant, earnest and laborious.* He that hides his Talent, shall receive the Wages of a slothful Servant. Christ is the Door, the only Way to this Rest. But *strait is the Gate, and narrow is the Way* (e); and we must *strive*, if we will *enter, for many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able* (f); which implies, that *the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth Violence* (g). Nor will it bring us to the End of the Saints, if we *begin in the Spirit, and end in the Flesh* (h). *He* only *that endureth to the End shall be saved* (i). And never did a Soul obtain Rest with God, whose Desire was not set upon him above all Things else in the World. *Where your Treasure is, there will your Heart be also* (k). The Remainder of our old Nature will much weaken and interrupt these Desires, but never overcome them. And, consider-

(b) Matt. ix. 12. (c) 2 Cor. iii. 5. (d) John xv. 5.
(e) Matt. vii. 13. (f) Luke xiii. 24. (g) Matt. xi. 12.
(h) Gal. iii. 3. (i) Matt. xxiv. 13. (k) Matt. vi. 21.

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ing the Oppoſition to our Deſires, from the contrary Principles in our Nature, and from the Weakneſs of our Graces, together with our continued Diſtance from the End, our Tendency to that End muſt be laborious, and with all our Might.—All theſe Things are preſuppoſed, in order to a Chriſtian's obtaining an Intereſt in heavenly Reſt.

§ 4. Now we have aſcended theſe Steps into the outward Court, may we look within the Vail? May we *ſhew what this Reſt contains*, as well as what it preſuppoſes? Alas, how little know I of that Glory! The Glimpſe which *Paul* had, contained what could not, or muſt not, be uttered. Had he ſpoke the Things of Heaven in the Language of Heaven, and none underſtood that Language, what the better? The Lord reveal to me what I may reveal to you! The Lord open ſome Light, and ſhew both you and me our Inheritance! Not as to *Balaam* only, whoſe Eyes were opened to ſee the Goodlineſs of *Jacob*'s Tents, and *Iſrael*'s Tabernacles, where he had no Portion, and from whence muſt come his own Deſtruction! Not as to *Moſes*, who had only a Diſcovery, inſtead of Poſſeſſion, and ſaw the Land which he never entered! But as the Pearl was revealed to the Merchant in the Goſpel, who reſted not till he had ſold all he had, and bought it! And as Heaven was opened to bleſſed *Stephen*, which he was ſhortly to enter, and the Glory ſhewed him, which ſhould be his own Poſſeſſion!—The Things contained in heavenly Reſt are ſuch as theſe;—*a ceaſing from Means of Grace*;—*a perfect Freedom from all Evils*;—*the higheſt Degree of the Saint's perſonal Perfection, both of Body and Soul*—*the neareſt Enjoyment of God the chief Good*;——and *a ſweet and conſtant Action of all the Powers of Body and Soul in this Enjoyment of God.*

§ 5.

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§ 5. (1) ONE Thing contained in heavenly Rest is, *the ceasing from Means of Grace.* When we have obtained the Haven, we have done sailing. When the Workman receives his Wages, it is implied he has done his Work. When we are at our Journey's End, we have done with the Way. *Whether Prophecies, they shall fail; whether Tongues, they shall cease; whether Knowledge, it* also, so far as it had the Nature of Means, *shall vanish away* (l). There shall be no more Prayer, because no more Necessity, but the full Enjoyment of what we prayed for: Neither shall we need to fast and weep, and watch any more, being out of the Reach of Sin and Temptations. Preaching is done; the Ministry of Man ceaseth; Sacraments become useless; the Labourers are called in, because the Harvest is gathered, the Tares burned, and the Work finished; the Unregenerate past Hope, and the Saints past Fear, for ever.

§ 6. (2) THERE is in heavenly Rest *a perfect Freedom from all Evils.* All the Evils that accompanied us through our Course, and which necessarily follow our Absence from the chief Good: Besides our Freedom from those eternal Flames, and restless Miseries, which the Neglecters of Christ and Grace must remedilesly endure; a woeful Inheritance, which, both by Birth and actual Merit, was due to us, as well as to them! In Heaven there is *nothing that defileth,* or is unclean: All *that* remains *without* (m). And doubtless there is not such a Thing as Grief and Sorrow known there: Nor is there such a Thing as a pale Face, a languid Body, feeble Joints, unable Infancy, decrepit Age, peccant Humours, painful or pining Sickness, griping Fears, consuming Cares, nor whatsoever deserves the Name of Evil. We did *weep and lament,* when *the World did rejoice;* but our

(l) 1 Cor. xiii. 8. (m) Rev. xxi. 27. xxii. 15.

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Sorrow is turned into Joy, and our *Joy shall no Man take from* us (n).

§ 7. (3) ANOTHER Ingredient of this Reſt is, *the highest Degree of the Saint's perſonal Perfection, both of Body and Soul.* Were the Glory ever ſo great, and themſelves not made capable of it, by a perſonal Perfection ſuitable thereto, it would be little to them. *Eye hath not ſeen, nor Ear heard, neither have entered into the Heart of Man, the Things which God hath prepared for them that love him* (o). For the Eye of Fleſh is not capable of ſeeing them, nor this Ear of hearing them, nor this Heart of underſtanding them: But there the Eye, and Ear, and Heart, are made capable; elſe how do they enjoy them? The more perfect the Sight is, the more delightful the beautiful Object. The more perfect the Appetite, the ſweeter the Food. The more muſical the Ear, the more pleaſant the Melody. The more perfect the Soul, the more joyous thoſe Joys, and the more glorious to us is that Glory.

§ 8. (4) THE principal Part of this Reſt, is *our neareſt Enjoyment of God the chief Good.* And here, *Reader*, wonder not if I be at a Loſs; and if my Apprehenſions receive but little of that which is in my Expreſſions. If *it did not appear*, to the beloved Diſciple, *what we ſhall be*, but only in general, that *when Chriſt ſhall appear we ſhall be like him* (p), no Wonder if I know little. When I know ſo little of God, I cannot much know what it is to enjoy him. If I know ſo little of Spirits, how little of the Father of Spirits, or the State of my own Soul, when advanced to the Enjoyment of him? I ſtand and look upon a Heap of Ants, and ſee them all with one View; they know not me, my Being, Nature, or Thoughts, tho' I am their Fellow-Creature; how little

(n) John xvi. 20, 22. (o) 1 Cor. ii. 9. (p) 1 John iii. 2.

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little then must we know of the great Creator, tho' he with one View clearly beholds us all? A Glimpse the Saints *behold as in a Glass* (q); which makes us capable of some poor, dark Apprehensions of what we shall behold in Glory. If I should tell a Worldling what the Holiness and spiritual Joys of the Saints on Earth are, he cannot know; for Grace cannot be clearly known without Grace; how much less could he conceive it, should I tell him of this Glory? But to the Saints I may be somewhat more encouraged to speak; for Grace gives them a dark Knowledge and slight Taste of Glory. If Men and Angels should study to speak the Blessedness of that State in one Word, what could they say beyond this, that it is the nearest Enjoyment of God? O the full Joys offered to a Believer in that one Sentence of Christ, *Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my Glory which thou hast given me* (r)! Every Word full of Life and Joy. If the Queen of *Sheba* had Cause to say of *Solomon*'s Glory, *Happy are thy Men, happy are thy Servants, which stand continually before thee, and that hear thy Wisdom* (s); then sure they that stand continually before God, and see his Glory, and the Glory of the Lamb, are more than happy. To them will Christ *give to eat of the Tree of Life*; and *to eat of the hidden Manna*; yea, he will *make them Pillars in the Temple of God, and they shall go no more out; and he will write upon them the Name of his God, and the Name of the City of his God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of Heaven from his God, and he will write upon them his new Name*; yea, more, if more may be, he *will grant them to sit with him in his Throne. These are they which came out of great Tribulation, and have washed their Robes, and made them white in the*

(q) 2 Cor. iii. 18. (r) John xvii. 24. (s) 1 Kings x. 8.

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Blood of the Lamb: Therefore are they before the Throne of God, and serve him Day and Night in his Temple, and he that sitteth on the Throne shall dwell among them; The Lamb which is in the Midst of the Throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living Fountains of Water; and God shall wipe away all Tears from their Eyes (t). O blind, deceived World! Can you shew us such a Glory? *This* is the City of our God, where *the Tabernacle of God is with Men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his People, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. The Glory of God shall lighten it, and the Lamb is the Light thereof. And there shall be no more Curse; but the Throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his Servants shall serve him, and they shall see his Face, and his Name shall be in their Foreheads. These Sayings are faithful and true, and the Things which must shortly be done* (u). And now we say, as *Mephibosheth, let* the World *take all, forasmuch as our Lord will come in Peace* (w). *Rejoice* therefore *in the Lord, O ye Righteous*, and say with his Servant *David, the Lord is the Portion of mine Inheritance: The Lines are fallen unto me in pleasant Places; yea, I have a goodly Heritage. I have set the Lord always before me, because he is at my right Hand I shall not be moved. Therefore my Heart is glad, and my Glory rejoiceth; my Flesh also shall rest in Hope. For thou wilt not leave my Soul in Hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see Corruption. Thou wilt shew me the Path of Life; in thy Presence is Fulness of Joy, at thy right Hand there are Pleasures for evermore* (x). What Presumption would it have been, once to have thought or spoke of such a Thing, if God had not spoken it before us? I durst not have thought of the Saint's Preferment in this

(t) Rev. ii. 7, 17. iii. 12, 21. vii. 14, 15, 17. (u) Rev. xxi. 3, 4, 24. xxii. 3, 4, 6. (w) 2 Sam. xix. 30. (x) Psalm xxxi. 16. 6, 8--11.

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this Life, as Scripture sets it forth, had it not been the express Truth of God. How indecent, to talk of being *Sons of God—speaking to him—having Fellowship with him—dwelling in him and he in us* (y); if this had not been God's own Language? How much less durst we have once thought of *shining forth as the Sun* —of being *Joint-heirs with Christ*—of *judging the World* —of *sitting on Christ's Throne*—of being *one in him and the Father* (z); if we had not all this from the Mouth, and under the Hand, of God? But *hath he said, and shall he not do it? Hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good* (a)? Yes, as the Lord God is true, *thus shall it be done to the Man, whom Christ delighteth to honour* (b). Be of good Chear, *Christian*, the Time is near, when God and thou shalt be near, and as near as thou canst well desire. Thou shalt dwell in his Family. Is that enough? It is better to *be a Door-keeper in the House of God, than to dwell in the Tents of Wickedness* (c). Thou shalt ever stand before him, about his Throne, in the Room with him, in his Presence-Chamber. Wouldst thou yet be nearer? Thou shalt be his Child, and he thy Father; thou shalt be an Heir of his Kingdom; yea more, the Spouse of his Son. And what more canst thou desire? Thou shalt be a Member of the Body of his Son; he shall be thy Head; thou shalt be one with him, who is one with the Father; as he himself hath desired for thee of his Father; *that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us; and the Glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and*

(y) 1 John iii. 1. Gen. xviii. 27. 1 John i. 3, iv. 16. (z) Matt. xiii. 43. Rom. viii. 17. 1 Cor. vi. 2. Rev. iii. 21. John xvii. 21. (a) Numb. xxiii. 19. (b) Esther vi. 11. (c) Psalm lxxxiv. 10.

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that the World may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me (d).

§ 9. (5) We must add, that this Rest contains *a sweet and constant Action of all the Powers of the Soul and Body in this Enjoyment of God.* It is not the Rest of a Stone, which ceaseth from all Motion when it attains the Centre.—This *Body* shall be so changed, that it shall no more be *Flesh and Blood*, which *cannot inherit the Kingdom of God*; but *a spiritual Body.* We *know not that Body that shall be, but God giveth it a Body as it hath pleased him, and to every Seed his own Body* (e). If *Grace* makes a Christian differ so much from what he was, as to say, *I am not the Man I was*; how much more will *Glory* make us differ? As much as a Body spiritual, above the Sun in Glory, exceeds these frail, noisome, diseased Lumps of Flesh, so far shall our *Senses* exceed those we now possess. Doubtless as God advanceth our Senses, and enlargeth our Capacity, so will he advance the Happiness of those Senses, and fill up with himself all that Capacity. Certainly the Body should not be raised up, and continued, if it should not share in the Glory. As it hath shared in the Obedience and Sufferings, so shall it also in the Blessedness. As Christ bought the whole Man, so shall the whole partake of the everlasting Benefits of the Purchase. O Blessed Employment of a glorified Body! to stand before the Throne of God and the Lamb, and to sound forth for ever, *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive Glory, and Honour, and Power. Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive Power, and Riches, and Wisdom, and Strength, and Honour, and Glory, and Blessing; for thou hast redeemed us to God by thy Blood, out of every Kindred, and Tongue, and People, and Nation, and hast made us unto our God Kings and Priests. Alleluia, Salvation, and Glory, and Honour,*

(d) John xvii. 21---23. (e) 1 Cor. xv. 50, 44, 37, 38.

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Honour, and Power, unto the Lord our God. Hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. O Christians! This is the blessed Rest; a Rest, as it were, without Rest; for *they rest not Day and Night, saying, Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come* (f).——And if the *Body* shall be thus employed, oh, how shall the *Soul* be taken up! As its Powers and Capacities are greatest, so its Actions are strongest, and its Enjoyments sweetest. As the bodily Senses have their proper Action, whereby they receive and enjoy their Objects, so does the Soul in its own Action enjoy its own Object, by *knowing, remembering, loving,* and *delightful joying.* This is the Soul's Enjoyment. By these Eyes it sees, and by these Arms it embraces.

§ 10. *Knowledge* of itself is very desirable. As far as the *Rational* Soul exceeds the *Sensitive,* so far the Delights of a *Philosopher,* in discovering the Secrets of Nature, and knowing the Mystery of Sciences, exceed the Delights of the *Glutton,* the *Drunkard,* the *Unclean,* and of all voluptuous *Sensualists* whatsoever. So excellent is all Truth. What then is their Delight who know the God of Truth? How noble a Faculty of the Soul is this *Understanding?* It can compass the Earth; it can measure the Sun, Moon, Stars, and Heaven; it can foreknow each Eclipse to a Minute, many Years before. But this is the Top of all its Excellency, that it can know God, who is infinite, who made all these, a little here, and more, much more hereafter. O the Wisdom and Goodness of our blessed Lord! He hath created the Understanding with a natural Bias and Inclination to Truth, as its Object; and to the prime Truth, as its prime Object. *Christian,* when, after long gazing Heaven-ward, thou hast got a Glimpse of Christ, dost thou not sometime seem

(f) Rev. iv. 11. v. 12, 9, 10. xix. 1, 6. iv. 8.

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seem to have been with *Paul* in *the third Heaven, whether in the Body, or out,* and to have seen what is *unutterable* (g)? Art thou not, with *Peter*, ready to say, "*Master, it is good to be here* (h)? Oh that I "might dwell in this Mount! Oh that I might ever "see what I now see!" Didst thou never look so long upon the Sun of Righteousness, till thine Eyes were dazzled with his astonishing Glory? And did not the Splendor of it make all Things below seem black and dark to thee? Especially in thy Day of Suffering for Christ, when he usually appears most manifestly to his People, didst thou never *see* one *walking in the Midst of the fiery Furnace* with thee *like the Son of God* (i)? Believe me, *Christians*, yea, believe God; you that have known most of God in Christ here, it is as Nothing to what you shall know; it scarce, in Comparison of that, deserves to be called Knowledge. For as these Bodies, so that Knowledge, must cease, that a more perfect may succeed. *Knowledge shall vanish away. For we know in Part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in Part shall be done away. When I was a Child, I spake as a Child, I understood as a Child, I thought as a Child; but when I became a Man, I put away childish Things. For now we see thro' a Glass darkly, but then Face to Face; now I know in Part, but then shall I know even as also I am known* (k). Marvel not therefore, *Christian*, how it can be *Life eternal, to know God, and Jesus Christ* (l). To enjoy God and Christ, is eternal Life; and the Soul's enjoying is in knowing. They that savour only of Earth, and consult with Flesh, think it a poor Happiness to know God. But *we know that we are of God, and the whole World lieth in Wickedness; and we know*

(g) 2 Cor. xii. 2--4. (h) Mark ix. 5. (i) Dan. iii. 25.
(k) 1 Cor. xiii. 8---12. (l) John xvii. 3.

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know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an Understanding that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal Life (m).

§ 11. THE *Memory* will not be idle, or useless, in this blessed Work. From that Height the Saint can look behind him, and before him. And to compare *past* with *present Things*, must needs raise in the blessed Soul an inconceivable Esteem and Sense of its Condition. To stand on that *Mount*, whence we can see the *Wilderness* and *Canaan*, both at once; to stand in *Heaven*, and look back on *Earth*, and weigh them together in the Balance of a comparing Sense and Judgment, how must it needs transport the Soul, and make it cry out, "Is this the Purchase that cost "so dear as the Blood of Christ? No Wonder. O "blessed Price! and thrice blessed Love, that in-"vented, and condescended! Is this the End of "Believing? Is this the End of the Spirit's Work-"ings? Have the Gales of Grace blown me into "such an Harbour? Is it hither that Christ hath "allured my Soul? O blessed *Way*, and thrice "blessed *End!* Is this the Glory which the Scrip-"tures spoke of, and Ministers preached of so much? "I see the Gospel is indeed good Tidings, even "Tidings of Peace and good Things, Tidings of "great Joy to all Nations! Is my Mourning, my "Fasting, my sad Humblings, my heavy Walking, "come to this? Is my praying, watching, fearing "to offend, come to this? Are all my Afflictions, "Satan's Temptations, the World's Scorns and Jeers, "come to this?——O vile Nature, that resisted so "much, and so long, such a Blessing! Unworthy "Soul, is this the Place thou camest so unwillingly "to? Was Duty wearisome? Was the World too "good

(m) 1 John v. 19, 20.

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" good to lose? Didst thou stick at leaving all, " denying all, and suffering any Thing, for *this?* " Wast thou loth to die, to come to *this?* O false " Heart, thou hadst almost betrayed me to eternal " Flames, and lost me this Glory! Art thou not " now ashamed, my Soul, that ever thou didst " question that Love which brought thee hither? " That thou wast jealous of the Faithfulness of thy " Lord? That thou suspectedst his Love, when " thou shouldst only have suspected thyself? That " ever thou didst quench a Motion of his Spirit? " And that thou shouldst misinterpret those Provi- " dences, and repine at those Ways, which have " such an End? Now thou art sufficiently con- " vinced, that thy Redeemer was saving thee, as " well when he crossed thy Desires, as when he " granted them; when he broke thy Heart, as when " he bound it up. No Thanks to thee, unworthy " Self, for this received Crown; but to Jehovah, " and the Lamb, be Glory for ever."

§ 12. BUT, oh! the full, the near, the sweet Enjoyment, is that of *Love. God is Love, and he that dwelleth in Love dwelleth in God, and God in him* (n). *Now* the poor Soul complains, " Oh that I could love " Christ more!" *Then*, thou canst not chuse but love him. Now, thou knowest little of his Amiable- ness, and therefore lovest little: Then, thine Eye will affect thy Heart, and the continual viewing of that perfect Beauty will keep thee in continual Trans- ports of Love. *Christians*, doth it not now stir up your Love, to remember all the Experiences of his Love? Doth not Kindness melt you, and the Sun- shine of divine Goodness warm your frozen Hearts? What will it do then, when you shall live in Love, and have All in him, who is All? Surely Love is both

(n) 1 John iv. 16.

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both Work and Wages. What a high Favour, that God will give us Leave to love him! That he will be embraced by those, who have embraced Lust and Sin before him! But more than this, he returneth Love for Love; nay, a thousand Times more. *Christian*, thou wilt be then brim-full of Love; yet, love as much as thou canst, thou shalt be ten thousand Times more beloved. Were the Arms of the Son of God open upon the Cross, and an open Passage made to his Heart by the Spear, and will not Arms and Heart be open to thee in Glory? Did he begin to love *before* thou lovedst, and will not he continue *now*? Did he love thee, an Enemy? thee, a Sinner? thee, who even loathedst thyself? and own thee, when thou didst disclaim thyself? And will he not now immeasurably love thee, a Son? thee, a perfect Saint? thee, who returnest some Love for Love? He that in Love wept over the old *Jerusalem* when near its Ruin, with what Love will he rejoice over the new *Jerusalem* in her Glory? *Christian*, believe this, and think on it; Thou shalt be eternally embraced in the Arms of that Love, which was from everlasting, and will extend to everlasting;—of that Love, which brought the Son of God's Love from Heaven to Earth, from Earth to the Cross, from the Cross to the Grave, from the Grave to Glory;——that Love, which was weary, hungry, tempted, scorned, scourged, buffeted, spit upon, crucified, pierced; which did fast, pray, teach, heal, weep, sweat, bleed, die;——that Love will eternally embrace thee. When perfect created Love, and most perfect uncreated Love, meet together, it will not be like *Joseph* and his Brethren, who lay upon one another's Necks weeping; it will be loving and rejoicing, not loving and sorrowing: Yet it will make *Satan*'s Court ring with the News, that *Joseph*'s Brethren

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Brethren are come, that the Saints are arrived safe at the Bosom of Christ, out of the Reach of Hell for ever: Nor is *there* any such Love as *David*'s and *Jonathan*'s, breathing out its last into sad Lamentations for a forced Separation. Know this, *Believer*, to thy everlasting Comfort, if those Arms have once embraced thee, neither Sin, nor Hell, can get thee thence for ever. Thou hast not to deal with an inconstant Creature, but with him *with whom is no Variableness, nor Shadow of Turning* (o). His Love to Thee will not be as thine was on Earth to him; seldom, and cold, up and down. He that would not cease, nor abate, his Love, for all thine Enmity, unkind Neglects, and churlish Resistances; can he cease to love thee, when he hath made thee truly lovely? He that keepeth thee so constant in thy Love to him, that thou canst challenge *Tribulation, Distress, Persecution, Famine, Nakedness, Peril, or Sword, to separate thy Love from Christ*, how much more will himself be constant (p)? Indeed thou mayst be *persuaded, that neither Death, nor Life, nor Angels, nor Principalities, nor Powers, nor Things present, nor Things to come, nor Height, nor Depth, nor any other Creature, shall be able to separate us from the Love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord* (q). And now are we not left in the Apostle's Admiration, *What shall we say to these Things* (r)? Infinite Love must needs be a Mystery to a finite Capacity. No Wonder *Angels desire to look into* this Mystery (s). And if it be the Study of Saints here, *to know the Breadth, and Length, and Depth, and Height, of the Love of Christ, which passeth Knowledge* (t); the Saint's everlasting Rest must consist in the Enjoyment of God by *Love*.

§ 13.

(o) James i. 17. (p) Rom. viii. 35. (q) Rom. viii, 38, 39.
(r) Rom. viii. 31. (s) 1 Pet. i. 12. (t) Ephes. iii. 18, 19.

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§ 13. NOR hath *Joy* the least Share in this Fruition. 'Tis *that*, which all the former lead to, and conclude in; even *the inconceivable Complacency which the Blessed feel in their seeing, knowing, loving, and being beloved of God.* This is the *white Stone, which no Man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it* (u). Surely this is the *Joy* which *a Stranger doth not intermeddle with* (w). All Christ's Ways of Mercy tend to, and end in, the Saint's Joys. He wept, sorrowed, suffered, that they might rejoice; he sendeth the Spirit to be their Comforter; he multiplies Promises; he discovers their future Happiness, *that their Joy may be full* (x). He opens to them the Fountain of *living Waters*, that they may *thirst no more*, and that it may *spring up in them to everlasting Life* (y). He *chastens* them, *that he may give them Rest* (z). He makes it their Duty to *rejoice in him alway, and again* commands them to *rejoice* (a). He never brings them into so low a Condition, wherein he does not leave them more Cause of Joy than Sorrow. And hath the Lord such a Care of our Comfort here? Oh, what will that Joy be, where the Soul being perfectly prepared for Joy, and Joy prepared by Christ for the Soul, it shall be our Work, our Business, eternally to rejoice! It seems the Saint's Joy shall be greater than the Damned's Torment; for their Torment is the Torment of Creatures, *prepared for the Devil and his Angels* (b); but our Joy is *the Joy of our Lord* (c). *The* same *Glory which the Father gave the Son, the Son hath given them* (d), *to sit with him in his Throne, even as he is set down with his Father in his Throne* (e). Thou, *poor Soul*, who prayest for Joy, waitest for Joy,

(u) Rev. ii. 17. (w) Prov. xiv. 10. (x) John xvi. 24.
(y) John iv. 10, 14. (z) Psalm xciv. 12, 13. (a) Phil. iv. 4.
(b) Matt. xxv. 41. (c) Matt. xxv. 21. (d) John xvii. 22.
(e) Rev. iii. 21.

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Joy, complaineſt for Want of Joy, longeſt for Joy; *thou* then ſhalt have full Joy, as much as thou canſt hold, and more than ever thou thoughteſt on, or thy Heart deſired. In the mean Time walk carefully, watch conſtantly, and then let God meaſure out to thee thy Times and Degrees of Joy. It may be he keeps them till thou haſt more Need. Thou hadſt better loſe thy *Comfort* than thy *Safety*. If thou ſhouldſt die full of Fears and Sorrows, it will be but a Moment, and they are all gone, and concluded in Joy inconceivable. As *the Joy of the Hypocrite*, ſo the Fears of the Upright, are *but for a Moment. God's Anger endureth but a Moment; in his Favour is Life; Weeping may endure for a Night, but Joy cometh in the Morning* (f). O bleſſed Morning! Poor, humble, drooping Soul, how would it fill thee with Joy now, if a Voice from Heaven ſhould tell thee of the Love of God, the Pardon of thy Sins, and aſſure thee of thy Part in theſe Joys? What then will thy Joy be, when thy actual Poſſeſſion ſhall convince thee of thy Title, and thou ſhalt be in Heaven before thou art well aware?——

§ 14. And it is not *thy Joy* only; it is a *mutual Joy*, as well as a *mutual Love*. Is there Joy in Heaven at thy Converſion, and will there be none at thy Glorification? Will not the Angels welcome thee thither, and congratulate thy ſafe Arrival?——Yea, it is the Joy of Jeſus Chriſt; for *now* he hath the End of his Undertaking, Labour, Suffering, Dying, when we have our Joys; *when he is glorified in his Saints, and admired in all them that believe* (g); when *he ſees of the Travel of his Soul, and is ſatisfied* (h). This is Chriſt's Harveſt, when he ſhall reap the Fruit of his Labours; and it will not repent him concerning his Suffe-

(f) Job xx. 5. Pſalm xxx. 5.
(h) Iſai. liii. 11.
(g) 2 Theſſ. i. 10.

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Sufferings, but he will rejoice over his purchased Inheritance, and his People will rejoice in him.——Yea, the Father himself puts on Joy too, in our Joy. As we *grieve his Spirit*(i), and *weary him with our Iniquities*(k); so is he rejoiced in our Good. O how quickly does he now spy a returning Prodigal, even *afar off?* How does he *run and meet him?* And with what *Compassion* does he *fall on his Neck, and kiss him, and put on him the best Robe, and a Ring on his Hand, and Shoes on his Feet, and kills the fatted Calf to eat and be merry*(l). This is indeed a happy Meeting; but nothing to the Embracing and Joy of that last and great Meeting.——Yea more; as God doth mutually love and joy, so He makes this *His* Rest, as it is *our* Rest. What an eternal Sabbatism, when the Work of Redemption, Sanctification, Preservation, Glorification, is all finished, and perfected for ever! *The Lord thy God in the Midst of thee is mighty, He will save, He will rejoice over thee with Joy, He will rest in his Love, He will joy over thee with Singing*(m). Well may we *then* rejoice in our God with Joy, and rest in our Love, and joy in him with Singing.

§ 15. ALAS! my fearful Heart scarce dares proceed. Methinks I hear the Almighty's Voice saying to me, *Who is this that darkeneth Counsel by Words without Knowledge*(n)*?* But pardon thy Servant, O Lord. I have not pried into unrevealed Things. I bewail that my Apprehensions are so dull, my Thoughts so mean, my Affections so stupid, and my Expressions so low, and unbeseeming such a Glory. *I have* only *heard by the Hearing of the Ear*; oh, let thy Servant *see thee*, and possess these Joys; and then shall I have more suitable Conceptions, and shall give thee fuller Glory; I shall *abhor my* present *Self*, and disclaim and renounce

(i) Eph. iv. 30. (k) Isa. xliii. 24. (l) Luke xv. 20---23.
(m) Zeph. iii. 17. (n) Job xxxviii. 2.

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renounce all these Imperfections. *I have uttered that I understood not, Things too wonderful for me, which I knew not* (o). Yet *I believed, and therefore have I spoken* (p). What, Lord, canst thou expect from Dust but Levity? or from Corruption, but Defilement? Though the Weakness and Irreverence be the Fruit of my own Corruption, yet the Fire is from thine *Altar*, and the Work of thy commanding. I looked not into thy *Ark*, nor put forth my Hand unto it, without thee. *Wash* away these Stains also *in the Blood of the Lamb*. Imperfect, or none, must be thy Service here. O take thy Son's Excuse, *the Spirit is willing, but the Flesh is weak* (q).

(o) Job xlii. 3, 5, 6.
(q) Matt. xxvi. 41.
(p) 2 Cor. iv. 13.

CHAP.

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CHAP. II.

The great Preparatives to the Saint's Reſt.

§ 1. *The Happineſs of Chriſtians in having a Way open into Paradiſe. There are four Things which principally prepare the Way to enter into it*; § 2, 3. *particularly*, (1) *The glorious Appearing of Chriſt*; § 4. (2) *The general Reſurrection*; § 5—8. (3) *The laſt Judgment*; § 9, 10. *and* (4.) *The Saint's Coronation*; § 11. *Tranſition to the Subject of the next Chapter*;

§ 1. THE Paſſage of *Paradiſe* is not now ſo blocked up, as when the Law and Curſe reigned. Wherefore finding, *beloved Chriſtians, a new and living Way conſecrated for us, thro' the Vail, that is to ſay, the Fleſh of Chriſt, by which* we may with *Boldneſs enter into the Holieſt*, I ſhall *draw near with fuller Aſſurance* (a): And finding the *flaming Sword* removed, ſhall look again into the *Paradiſe* of our God: And becauſe I know that this is no *forbidden Fruit*, and withall that *it is good for Food, and pleaſant to the* ſpiritual *Eyes, and a Tree to be deſired to make one* truly *wiſe* and happy; I ſhall, thro' the Aſſiſtance of the Spirit, *take and eat thereof* myſelf, *and give* to you, according to my Power, that you may *eat*. The *Porch* of this *Temple* is exceeding glorious, and *the Gate of it is called Beautiful*. Here are *four Things*, as the four Corners of this Porch. Here is *the moſt glorious Coming*

(a) Heb. x. 19, 20, 22.

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Coming and Appearance of the Son of God;—that great Work of Jesus Christ in raising our Bodies from the Dust, and uniting them again to the Soul;—the publick and solemn Process at their Judgment, where they shall first themselves be acquitted and justified, and then with Christ judge the World;—together with their solemn Coronation, and receiving the Kingdom.

§ 2. (1) *The most glorious Coming and Appearance of the Son of God* may well be reckoned into his People's Glory. For their Sake he came into the World, suffered, died, rose, ascended, and for their Sake it is that he will return. To this End *will Christ come again*, to *receive his People unto himself, that where he is, there they may be also* (b). The Bridegroom's Departure was not upon Divorce. He did not leave us with a Purpose to return no more. He hath left Pledges enough to assure us of the contrary. We have his Word, his many Promises, his Sacraments, which *shew forth his Death till he come* (c); and his Spirit, to direct, sanctify, and comfort, till he return. We have frequent Tokens of Love from him, to shew us, he forgets not his Promise, nor us. We daily behold the Forerunners of his Coming, foretold by himself. We see *the Fig-Tree putteth forth Leaves*, and therefore *know that Summer is nigh* (d). Tho' the riotous World *say, my Lord delayeth his Coming* (e); yet let the Saints *lift up their Heads, for their Redemption draweth nigh* (f). Alas, *Fellow-Christians*, what should we do, if our Lord should not return? What a Case are we here left in? What? leave us *in the Midst of Wolves* (g), and *among Lions* (h), *a Generation of Vipers* (i), and here forget us? Did he buy us so dear, and then leave us

(b) John xiv. 3. (c) 1 Cor. xi. 26. (d) Matt. xxiv. 32.
(e) Matt. xxiv. 48. (f) Luke xxi. 28. (g) Matt. x. 16.
(h) Psalm lvii. 4. (i) Matt. iii. 7.

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us sinning, suffering, groaning, dying daily, and will he come no more to us? It cannot be.——This is like our unkind Dealing with Christ, who, when we feel ourselves warm in the World, care not for coming to him: But this is not like Christ's Dealing with us. He that would come to suffer, will surely come to triumph. He that would come to purchase, will surely come to possess. Where else were all our Hopes? What were become of our Faith, our Prayers, our Tears, and our Waiting? What were all the Patience of the Saints worth to them? Were we not left *of all Men most miserable* (k)? *Christians*, hath Christ made us forsake all the World, and be forsaken of all the World? to hate all, and be hated of all? and all this for *him*, that we might have *him* instead of all? And will he, think you, after all this, forget us, and forsake us himself? Far be such a Thought from our Hearts!—But why stayed he not with his People while he was here? Why? Was not the Work on Earth done? Must he not take Possession of Glory in our Behalf? Must he not intercede with the Father, plead his Sufferings, be filled with the Spirit to send forth, receive Authority, and subdue his Enemies? Our Abode here is short. If he had stayed on Earth, what would it have been to enjoy him for a few Days, and then die? He hath more in Heaven to dwell among; even the Spirits of many Generations. He will have us live by Faith, and not by Sight.

§ 3. O *Fellow-Christians*, what a Day will that be, when we, who have been kept Prisoners by Sin, by Sinners, by the Grave, shall be fetched out by the Lord himself? It will not be such a Coming as his *first* was, in Poverty and Contempt, to be spit upon, and buffeted, and crucified again. He will not come, O care-

(k) 1 Cor. xv. 19.

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O careleſs World! to be ſlighted and neglected by you any more. Yet *that* Coming wanted not its Glory. If *the heavenly Hoſt*, for the Celebration of his Nativity, muſt *praiſe God* (l); with what Shoutings will Angels and Saints *at that Day* proclaim *Glory to God, Peace and Good-will towards Men?* If a *Star* muſt lead Men from remote Parts of the World *to come to worſhip* a Child in a Manger (m); how will the Glory of his next Appearing conſtrain all the World to acknowledge his Sovereignty? If, *riding on an Aſs*, he enter *Jeruſalem* with *Hoſannas* (n); with what Peace and Glory will he come toward the *new Jeruſalem?* If, when he was in *the Form of a Servant* (o), they cry out, *what Manner of Man is this, that even the Winds and the Sea obey him* (p)? What will they ſay, when *they ſhall ſee him coming in his Glory*, and the Heavens and the Earth obey him? *Then ſhall all the Tribes of the Earth mourn* (q). To think and ſpeak of that Day with Horror, doth well beſeem the impenitent Sinner, but ill the believing Saint. Shall the *Wicked* behold him, and cry, "Yonder is he whoſe Blood we neglected, whoſe Grace we reſiſted, whoſe Counſels we refuſed, whoſe Government we caſt off!" And ſhall not the *Saints*, with inconceivable Gladneſs, cry, "Yonder is he whoſe Blood redeemed us, whoſe Spirit cleanſed us, whoſe Law did govern us, in whom we truſted, and he hath not deceived our Truſt; for whom we long waited, and now we ſee we have not waited in vain! O curſed Corruption! that would have had us turn to the World, and preſent Things, and ſay, *Why ſhould we wait for the Lord any longer* (r)? Now we ſee, *Bleſſed are all they that wait for him* (s)."

And

(l) Luke ii. 13, 14. (m) Matt. ii. 2. (n) Matt. xxi. 5--8.
Phil. ii. 7. (p) Matt. viii. 27. (q) Matt. xxiv. 30.
2 Kings vi. 33. (s) Iſa. xxx. 18.

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And now, *Christians*, should we not put up that Petition heartily, *Thy Kingdom come? The Spirit and the Bride say, Come: And let him that heareth*, and readeth, *say, Come.* Our Lord himself *says, Surely I come quickly. Amen, even so, come Lord Jesus* (t).

§ 4. (2) Another Thing that leads to Paradise is, *that great Work of Jesus Christ, in raising our Bodies from the Dust, and uniting them again unto the Soul.* A wonderful Effect of infinite Power and Love! Yea, wonderful indeed, says Unbelief, if it be true. What, shall all these scattered Bones and Dust become a Man? —Let me with Reverence plead for God, for that Power whereby I hope to arise. What beareth the massy Body of the Earth? What limits the vast Ocean of the Waters? Whence is that constant Ebbing and Flowing of the Tides? How many Times bigger than all the Earth is the Sun, that glorious Body of Light? Is it not as easy to raise the Dead, as to make Heaven, and Earth, and all of Nothing?— Look not on the dead Bones, and Dust, and Difficulty, but at the Promise. Contentedly commit these Carcasses to a Prison, that shall not long contain them. Let us *lie down in Peace*, and take our Rest; it will not be an everlasting Night, nor endless Sleep. If *uncloathing* be the Thing thou fearest; it is that thou mayst have better *Cloathing* (u). If to be turned out of Doors be the Thing thou fearest; remember, that when the *earthly House of this Tabernacle is dissolved*, thou hast *a Building of God, an House not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens* (w). Lay down chearfully this Lump of *Corruption*; thou shalt undoubtedly receive it again in *Incorruption*. Lay down freely this *terrestrial*, this *natural Body*; thou shalt receive it again a *celestial*, a *spiritual Body*. Tho' thou lay it down with great *Dishonour*; thou shalt receive it in

(t) Rev. xxii. 17, 20. (u) 2 Cor. v. 4. (w) 2 Cor. v. 1.

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Glory. Tho' thou art separated from it thro' *Weakness*; it shall be raised again in mighty *Power*. *In a Moment, in the Twinkling of an Eye, at the last Trump; for the Trumpet shall sound, and the Dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed*(x). *The Dead in Christ shall rise first. Then they which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the Clouds, to meet the Lord in the Air*(y). Triumph now, O *Christian*, in these Promises; thou shalt shortly triumph in their Performance. *This is the Day which the Lord will make, we shall rejoice and be glad in it*(z). The Grave, that could not keep our Lord, cannot keep us. He arose for us, and by the same Power will cause us to arise. *For if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him*(a). Let us never look at the Grave, but let us see the Resurrection beyond it. Yea, let us *be stedfast, immoveable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord, forasmuch as we know our Labour is not in vain in the Lord*(b).

§ 5. (3) PART of this Prologue to the Saint's Rest, is *the publick and solemn Process at their Judgment, where they shall first themselves be acquitted and justified, and then with Christ judge the World*. Young and old, of all Estates and Nations, that ever were from the Creation to that Day, must here come, and receive their Doom. O terrible! O joyful Day! Terrible to those that have forgot the Coming of their Lord! Joyful to the Saints, whose Waiting and Hope was to see this Day! Then shall the World *behold the Goodness and Severity of God; on them which perish, Severity; but* to his chosen, *Goodness* (c). Every one must

(x) 1 Cor. xv. 42—44, 52.
(z) Psal. cxviii. 24.
(b) 1 Cor. xv. 58.
(y) 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17.
(a) 1 Thess. iv. 14.
(c) Rom. xi. 22.

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must *give an Account of his Stewardship* (d). Every Talent of Time, Health, Wit, Mercies, Afflictions, Means, Warnings, must be reckoned for. The Sins of Youth, those which they had forgotten, and their secret Sins, shall all be laid open before Angels and Men. They shall see the Lord Jesus, whom they neglected, whose Word they disobeyed, whose Ministers they abused, whose Servants they hated, now sitting to judge them. Their own Consciences shall cry out against them, and call to their Remembrance all their Misdoings. Which Way will the wretched Sinner look? Who can conceive the terrible Thoughts of his Heart? Now the World cannot help him; his old Companions cannot; the Saints neither can, nor will: Only the Lord Jesus can; but, there is the Misery, he will not. Time was, *Sinner*, when Christ would, and you would not; now, fain would you, and he will not. All in vain, to cry *to the Mountains and Rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the Face of him that sitteth upon the Throne* (e); for thou hast the Lord of Mountains and Rocks for thine Enemy, whose Voice they will obey, and not thine. *I charge thee therefore, before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the Quick and the Dead, at his Appearing, and his Kingdom* (f), that thou set thyself seriously to ponder on these Things.

§ 6. But why trembleſt thou, *O humble gracious Soul?* He that would not lose one *Noah* in a common Deluge, nor overlook one *Lot* in *Sodom*; nay, that could do Nothing till he went forth; will he forget thee at that Day? *The Lord knoweth how to deliver the Godly out of Temptations, and to reserve the Unjust unto the Day of Judgment to be punished* (g). He knoweth how to make the same Day the greatest Terror to

(d) Luke xvi. 2. (e) Rev. vi. 16. (f) 2 Tim. iv. 1.
(g) 2 Pet. ii. 9.

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his Foes, and yet the greateſt Joy to his People. *There is no Condemnation to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus, who walk not after the Fleſh, but after the Spirit. Who ſhall lay any Thing to the Charge of God's Elect?* Shall the Law? *The Law of the Spirit of Life in Chriſt Jeſus, hath made them free from the Law of Sin and Death.* Or ſhall Conſcience? *The Spirit itſelf beareth Witneſs with their Spirit, that they are the Children of God. It is God that juſtifieth; who is he that condemneth* (h)*?* If our Judge condemn us not, who ſhall? He that ſaid to the adulterous Woman, *hath no Man condemned thee? Neither do I* (i); will ſay to us, more faithfully than *Peter* to him, *Though all Men deny thee,* or condemn thee, *I will not* (k). Having *confeſſed me before Men, thee will I confeſs alſo before my Father which is in Heaven* (l).

§ 7. WHAT inexpreſſible Joy, that our dear Lord, who loveth our Souls, and whom our Souls love, ſhall be our Judge! Will a Man fear to be judged by his deareſt Friend? or a Wife by her own Huſband? *Chriſtian,* did Chriſt come down, and ſuffer, and weep, and bleed, and die for thee, and will he now condemn thee? Was he judged, condemned, and executed in thy ſtead, and now will he condemn thee himſelf? Hath he done moſt of the Work already, in redeeming, regenerating, ſanctifying, and preſerving thee, and will he now undo all again? Well then, let the Terror of that Day be never ſo great, ſurely our Lord can mean no ill to us in all. Let it make the Devils tremble, and the Wicked tremble; but it ſhall make us leap for Joy. It muſt needs affect us deeply with the Senſe of our Mercy and Happineſs, to ſee moſt of the World tremble with Terror, while we triumph with Joy; to hear them

(h) Rom. viii. 1, 2, 16, 33, 34.
(i) John viii. 10, 11.
(k) Matt. xxvi. 33, 35.
(l) Matt. x. 32.

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them doomed to everlasting Flames, when we are proclaimed Heirs of the Kingdom; to see our Neighbours that lived in the same Towns, came to the same Congregation, dwelt in the same Houses, and were esteemed more honourable in the World than ourselves, now by the Searcher of Hearts eternally separated. This, with the great Magnificence and Dreadfulness of the Day, the *Apostle* pathetically expresses; *It is a righteous Thing with God, to recompense Tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled, Rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven, with his mighty Angels, in flaming Fire, taking Vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting Destruction from the Presence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power; when he shall come to be glorified in his Saints, and to be admired in all them that believe in that Day* (m).

§ 8. YET more, we shall be so far from the Dread of that Judgment, that ourselves shall become the Judges. Christ will take his People, as it were, into Commission with himself, and they shall sit and approve his righteous Judgment. *Do ye not know that the Saints shall judge the World?* Nay, *know ye not that we shall judge Angels* (n)? Were it not for the Word of Christ that speaks it, this Advancement would seem incredible, and the Language arrogant. Even *Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of this, saying, Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his Saints, to execute Judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly Deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard Speeches which ungodly Sinners have spoken against him* (o). Thus shall the Saints be honoured, *and the Upright*

(m) 2 Thess. i. 6---10. (n) 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3.
(o) Jude 14, 15.

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shall have Dominion in the Morning (p). O that the careleſs World *were wiſe, that they underſtood this, that they would conſider their latter End* (q)! That they would be now of the ſame Mind as they will be, when they ſhall ſee *the Heavens paſs away with a great Noiſe, and the Elements melt with fervent Heat, the Earth alſo, and the Works that are therein, burnt up!* When all ſhall be on Fire about their Ears, and all earthly Glory conſumed. For *the Heavens and the Earth, which are now, are reſerved unto Fire againſt the Day of Judgment, and Perdition of ungodly Men. Seeing then that all theſe Things ſhall be diſſolved, what Manner of Perſons ought ye to be in all holy Converſation and Godlineſs, looking for and haſting unto the Coming of the Day of God, wherein the Heavens being on Fire ſhall be diſſolved, and the Elements ſhall melt with fervent Heat* (r)?

§ 9. (4) THE laſt Preparative to the Saint's Reſt is *their ſolemn Coronation, and receiving the Kingdom.* For as Chriſt, their Head, is anointed both King and Prieſt, ſo under him are his People *made unto God* both *Kings and Prieſts, to reign*, and to offer Praiſes for ever (s). The *Crown of Righteouſneſs, which was laid up for them, ſhall by the Lord the righteous Judge be given them at that Day* (t). They have been *faithful unto Death, and* therefore *he will give them a Crown of Life* (u). And according to the Improvement of *their Talents* here, ſo ſhall *their Rule* and Dignity be enlarged (w). They are not dignified with empty Titles, but real Dominion. Chriſt *will grant them to ſit with him in his Throne* (x); *and will give them Power over the Nations, even as he received of his Father; and he will give them the Morning Star* (y). The Lord himſelf

(p) Pſalm xlix. 14. (q) Rev. v. 10. (w) Matt. xxv. 21, 23. (x) Deut. xxxii. 29. (t) 2 Tim. iv. 8. (x) Rev. iii. 21. (r) 2 Pet. iii. 7--12. (u) Rev. ii. 10. (y) Rev. ii. 26--28.

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himself will give them Possession with these applauding Expressions; *Well done, good and faithful Servant, thou hast been faithful over a few Things, I will make thee Ruler over many Things; enter thou into the Joy of thy Lord* (z).

§ 10. AND with this solemn and blessed Proclamation shall he inthrone them; *Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World* (a). Every Word full of Life and Joy.——*Come*—this is the holding forth of the golden Sceptre, to warrant our Approach unto this Glory. Come now as near as you will; fear not the *Bethshemites* Judgment; for the *Enmity* is utterly *abolished* (b). This is not such a *Come* as we were wont to hear, *come, take up your Cross, and follow me* (c). Though that was sweet, yet this much more.——*Ye Blessed*—Blessed indeed, when that Mouth shall so pronounce us! For tho' the World hath accounted us accursed, and we have been ready to account ourselves so; yet certainly *those that he blesseth, are blessed; and those whom he curseth, only are cursed, and his Blessing cannot be reversed* (d).——*Of my Father*—Blessed in the Father's Love, as well as the Son's, for they *are one* (e). The Father hath testified his Love in their Election, Donation to Christ, sending of Christ, and accepting his Ransom; as the Son hath also testified his.—*Inherit*—No longer *Bondmen*, nor *Servants* only, nor *Children under Age*, who *differ not* in Possession, but only in Title, *from Servants* (f). But now we are *Heirs of the Kingdom* (g), *and Joint-Heirs with Christ* (h).——*The Kingdom*—No less than the Kingdom? Indeed to be *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*, is our Lord's own proper Title: But to be *Kings, and reign with him,*

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(z) Matt. xxv. 23. (a) Matt. xxv. 34. (b) Eph. ii. 15.
(c) Matt. xvi. 24. (d) Numb. xxii. 6. xxiii. 20. (e) John x. 30.
(f) Gal. iv. 1---7. (g) James ii. 5. (h) Rom. viii.

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him (i), is our's. The Enjoyment of this Kingdom is, as the Light of the Sun, each have the whole, and the reſt never the leſs.—*Prepared for you*—God is the *Alpha*, as well as the *Omega*, of our Bleſſedneſs. Eternal Love hath laid the Foundation. He prepared the Kingdom for us, and then prepared us for the Kingdom. This is the Preparation of his Counſel and Decree; for the Execution whereof Chriſt was yet to make a further Preparation.—*For you*—Not for Believers only in general, who, without individual Perſons, are nobody; but for you perſonally.——*From the Foundation of the World*—Not only from the Promiſe after *Adam*'s Fall, but from Eternity.

§ 11. THUS we have ſeen the Chriſtian ſafely landed in Paradiſe, and conveyed honourably to his Reſt. Now let us a little further, in the next Chapter, view thoſe Manſions, conſider their Priviledges, and ſee whether there be any Glory like unto this Glory.

(i) Rev. xix. 16. xx. 6.

CHAP.

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CHAP. III.

The Excellencies of the Saint's Reſt.

§ 1. *The Excellencies of the Saint's Reſt are enumerated.* § 2. (1) *It is the purchaſed Poſſeſſion.* § 3, 4. (2) *A free Gift.* § 5. (3) *Peculiar to Saints.* § 6. (4) *An Aſſociation with Saints and Angels.* § 7. (5) *It derives its Joys immediately from God himſelf.* § 8. (6) *It will be ſeaſonable.* § 9. (7) *Suitable.* § 10—12. (8) *Perfect, without Sin and Suffering.* § 13. (9) *And everlaſting.* § 14. *The Chapter concludes with a ſerious Addreſs to the Reader.*

§ 1. LET us draw a little nearer, and ſee what further Excellencies this Reſt affordeth. The Lord hide us *in the Clefts of the Rock, and cover us with the Hand* of indulgent Grace, while we approach to take this View! This Reſt is excellent for being——a *purchaſed Poſſeſſion*;—a *free Gift*;—*peculiar to Saints*;—an *Aſſociation with Saints and Angels*;—yet *deriving its Joys immediately from God*;—and becauſe it will be a *ſeaſonable*,—*ſuitable*,—*perfect*,—and *eternal Reſt*.

§ 2. (1) IT is a moſt ſingular Honour of the Saint's Reſt, to be called *the purchaſed Poſſeſſion* (a). That is, the Fruit of the Blood of the Son of God; yea, the chief Fruit, the End and Perfection of all the Fruits and Efficacy of that Blood. Greater Love than this there is not, to lay down the Life of the

(a) Epheſ. i. 14.

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Lover. And to have this our Redeemer ever before our Eyes, and the livelieſt Senſe and freſheſt Remembrance of that dying bleeding Love ſtill upon our Souls: How will it fill our Souls with perpetual Joy, to think that in the Streams of this Blood we have ſwam thro' the Violence of the World, the Snares of Satan, the Seducements of Fleſh, the Curſe of the Law, the Wrath of an offended God, the Accuſations of a guilty Conſcience, and the vexing Doubts and Fears of an unbelieving Heart, and are arrived ſafe at the Preſence of God! *Now* he cries to us, *Is it nothing to you, all ye that paſs by? Behold and ſee, if there be any Sorrow like unto my Sorrow* (b)! and we ſcarce regard the mournful Voice, nor ſcarce turn aſide to view the Wounds. But *then* our perfected Souls will feel, and flame in Love for Love. With what aſtoniſhing Apprehenſions will redeemed Saints everlaſtingly behold their bleſſed Redeemer? the Purchaſer, and the Price, together with the Poſſeſſion? Neither will the View of his Wounds of Love, renew our Wounds of Sorrow. He, whoſe firſt Words after his Reſurrection were to a great Sinner, *Woman, why weepeſt thou* (c)? knows how to raiſe Love and Joy, without any Cloud of Sorrow, or Storm of Tears. If any Thing we enjoy was purchaſed with the Life of our deareſt Friend, how highly ſhould we value it? If a dying Friend deliver us but a Token of his Love, how carefully do we preſerve it? And ſtill remember him when we behold it, as if his own Name were written on it? And will not then the Death and Blood of our Lord everlaſtingly ſweeten our poſſeſſed Glory! As we write down the Price our Goods coſt us; ſo on our Righteouſneſs and Glory, write down the Price, *the precious Blood of Chriſt*. His Sufferings were to ſatisfy the Juſtice that required Blood,

(b) Lam. i. 12. (c) John xx. 15.

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Blood, and to bear what was due to Sinners, and so to restore them to the Life they lost, and the Happiness they fell from. The Work of Christ's Redemption so well pleased the Father, that he gave him Power to advance his Chosen, and give them the Glory which was given to himself, and all this *according to his good Pleasure, and the Counsel of his own Will* (d).

§ 3. (2) ANOTHER Pearl in the Saint's Diadem is, that it's *a free Gift*. These two, *purchased* and *free*, are the Chains of Gold which make up the Wreaths for the Tops of the Pillars in the Temple of God (e). It was dear to Christ, but free to us. When Christ was to buy, Silver and Gold were nothing worth; Prayers and Tears could not suffice, nor any Thing below his Blood; but our buying is receiving; we have it freely, *without Money, and without Price* (f). A thankful Acceptance of a free Acquittance, is no paying of the Debt. Here is all free; if the Father freely give the Son, and the Son freely pay the Debt; and if God freely accepts that Way of Payment, when he might have required it of the Principal; and if both Father and Son freely offer us the purchased Life on our cordial Acceptance, and if they freely send the Spirit to enable us to accept; what is here then that is not free? Oh the everlasting Admiration that must needs surprize the Saints to think of this Freeness! "What did the "Lord see in me, that he should judge me meet for "such a State? That I, who was but a poor, dis-"eased, despised Wretch, should be clad in the "Brightness of this Glory! That I, a creeping "Worm, should be advanced to this high Dignity! "That I, who was but lately groaning, weeping, "dying, should now be as full of Joy as my Heart "can

(d) Ephes. i. 9, 11. (e) 1 Kings vii. 17. (f) Isa. lv. 1.

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" can hold! yea, ſhould be taken from the Grave, " where I was rotting, and from the Duſt and Dark- " neſs, where I ſeemed forgotten, and be here ſet " before his Throne! That I ſhould be taken, with " *Mordecai*, from Captivity, and be ſet next unto the " King; And with *Daniel*, from the Den, to be " made Ruler of Princes and Provinces! Who can " fathom unmeaſurable Love?" If Worthineſs were our Condition for Admittance, we might ſit down and *weep*, with St. *John*, *becauſe no Man was found worthy*. But *the Lion of the Tribe of Judah is worthy, and hath prevailed* (g); and by that Title muſt we hold the Inheritance. We ſhall *offer* there the *Offering* that *David* refuſed, even Praiſe for *that which coſt us nothing* (h). Here our Commiſſion runs, *freely ye have received, freely give* (i); but Chriſt has dearly bought, yet freely gives.

§ 4. If it were only for nothing, and without our Merit, the Wonder were great; but it is moreover againſt our Merit, and againſt our long endeavouring our own Ruin. What an aſtoniſhing Thought it will be, to think of the unmeaſurable Difference between our Deſervings and Receivings! Between the State we ſhould have been in, and the State we are in! To look down upon *Hell*, and ſee the vaſt Difference that Grace hath made betwixt us and them! To ſee the Inheritance there, which we were *born* to, ſo different from that which we are *adopted* to! What Pangs of Love will it cauſe within us, to think, " *yonder* was the Place that Sin would have " brought me to, but *this* is it that Chriſt hath " brought me to! Yonder *Death* was *the Wages of* " my *Sin*, but this *eternal Life is the Gift of God, thro'* " *Jeſus Chriſt my Lord* (k)! *Who made me to differ* (l)?

" Had

(g) Rev. v. 4, 5. (h) 2 Sam. xxiv. 24. (i) Matt. x. 8.
(k) Rom. vi. 23. (l) 1 Cor. iv. 7.

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" Had I not now been in those Flames, if I had had " my own Way, and been let alone to my own " Will? Should I not have *lingered in Sodom*, till " the Flames had seized on me, if God had not in " Mercy *brought me out* (m)?" Doubtless this will be our everlasting Admiration, that so rich a Crown should fit the Head of so vile a Sinner! That such high Advancement, and such long Unfruitfulness and Unkindness, can be the State of the same Person! And that such vile Rebellions can conclude in such most precious Joys! But no Thanks to us, nor to any of our Duties and Labours, much less to our Neglects and Laziness: We know to whom the Praise is due, and must be given for ever. Indeed to *this* very End it was, that infinite Wisdom cast the whole Design of Man's Salvation into this Mould of *Purchase* and *Freeness*, that the Love and Joy of Man might be perfected, and the Honour of Grace most highly advanced; that the Thought of Merit might neither cloud the one, nor obstruct the other; and that on these two Hinges the Gate of Heaven might turn. So then let DESERVED be written on the Door of Hell, but on the Door of Heaven and Life THE FREE GIFT.

§ 5. (3) THIS Rest is *peculiar to Saints*, belongs to no other of all the Sons of Men. If all *Egypt* had been Light, the *Israelites* would not have had the less; but to enjoy that Light alone, while their Neighbours lived in thick Darkness, must make them more sensible of their Priviledge. Distinguishing Mercy affects more than any Mercy. If *Pharoah* had passed as safely as *Israel*, the *Red Sea* would have been less remembered. If the rest of the World had not been drowned, and the rest of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* not burned, the saving of *Noah* had been no Wonder,

(m) Gen. xix. 16.

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der, nor *Lot*'s Deliverance so much talked of. When one is enlightened, and another left in Darkness; one reformed, and another by his Lust enslaved; it makes the Saints cry out, *Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the World* (n)? When the Prophet is sent to one *Widow* only of all that *were in Israel*, and to *cleanse* one *Naaman* of all the *Lepers* (o), the Mercy is more observable. That will sure be a Day of passionate Sense on both Sides, when *there shall be two in one Bed*, and *two in the Field, the one taken, and the other left* (p). The Saints shall look down upon the burning Lake, and in the Sense of their own Happiness, and in the Approbation of God's just Proceedings, they shall rejoice and sing, *Thou art righteous, O Lord, which wast, art, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus* (q).

§ 6. (4) But though this Rest be proper to the Saints, yet it is common to all the Saints; for it is *an Association of blessed Spirits, both Saints and Angels*; a Corporation of perfected Saints, whereof Christ is the Head; the Communion of Saints compleated. As we have been together in the Labour, Duty, Danger, and Distress; so shall we be in the great Recompence and Deliverance. As we have been scorned and despised; so shall we be owned and honoured together. We, who have gone through the Day of Sadness, shall enjoy together that Day of Gladness. Those, who have been with us in Persecution and Prison, shall be with us also in that Palace of Consolation. How oft have our Groans made, as it were, one Sound? our Tears one Stream? and our Desires one Prayer? But now all our Praises shall make up one Melody; all our Churches, one Church; and all ourselves, one Body; for we shall be *all one* in Christ,

(n) John xiv. 22. (o) Luke iv. 25--27. (p) Luke xvii. 34, 36.
(q) Rev. xvi. 5.

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Christ, even *as he and the Father are one*(r). 'Tis true, we must be careful, not to look for that in the Saints, which is alone in Christ. But if the Fore-Thought of *sitting down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the Kingdom of Heaven*(s), may be our lawful Joy; how much more the real Sight and actual Possession? It cannot chuse but be comfortable to think of that Day, when we shall join with *Moses* in his *Song*, with *David* in his *Psalms of Praise*, and with all the Redeemed in *the Song of the Lamb* for ever(t); when we shall see *Enoch walking with God* (u); *Noah* enjoying the End of his Singularity; *Joseph* of his Integrity; *Job* of his Patience; *Hezekiah* of his Uprightness; and all the Saints *the End of their Faith*(w). Not only our old Acquaintance, but all the Saints, of all Ages, whose Faces in the Flesh we never saw, we shall there both know, and comfortably enjoy. Yea Angels, as well as Saints, will be our blessed Acquaintance. Those, who now are willingly our *ministring Spirits*(x), will willingly then be our Companions in Joy. They, who had such *Joy in Heaven* for our Conversion(y), will gladly rejoice with us in our Glorification. Then we shall truly say, as *David*, *I am a Companion of all them that fear thee*(z); when we *are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the City of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable Company of Angels; to the general Assembly, and Church of the First-born which are written in Heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the Spirits of just Men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new Covenant*(a). 'Tis a singular Excellence of heavenly Rest, that we *are Fellow Citizens with the Saints, and of the Houshold of God*(b).

§ 7.

(r) John xvii. 21. (s) Matt. viii. 11. (t) Rev. xv. 3.
(u) Gen v. 24. (w) 1 Pet. i. 9. (x) Heb. i. 14.
(y) Luke xv. 7, 10. (z) Psalm cxix. 63. (a) Heb. xii. 22--24.
(b) Ephes. ii. 19.

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§ 7. (5) As another Property of our Rest, we shall *derive its Joys immediately from God.* Now we have nothing at all immediately, but at the second, or third Hand, or how many, who knows? From the Earth, from Man, from Sun and Moon, from the Ministration of Angels, and from the Spirit, and Christ. Tho', in the Hand of Angels, the Stream savours not of the Imperfection of Sinners, yet it does of the Imperfection of Creatures; and as it comes from Man, it savours of both. How *quick and piercing is the Word* in itself(c)? Yet many Times it never enters, being managed by a feeble Arm. What Weight and Worth is there in every Passage of the blessed Gospel? Enough, one would think, to enter and force the dullest Soul, and wholly possess its Thoughts and Affections; and yet how oft does it fall as Water upon a Stone? The Things of God, which we handle, are divine; but our Manner of handling is human. There is little we touch, but we leave the Print of our Fingers behind. If God speaks the Word himself, it will be a piercing, melting Word indeed. The Christian now knows by Experience, that his most immediate Joys are his sweetest Joys; which have least of Man, and are most directly from the Spirit. Christians, who are much in secret Prayer and Contemplation, are Men of greatest Life and Joy; because they have all more immediately from God himself. Not that we should cast off Hearing, Reading, and Conference, or neglect any Ordinance of God: But to live above them, while we use them, is the Way of a Christian. There is Joy in these remote Receivings; but the *Fulness of Joy is in God's* immediate *Presence* (d). We shall then have Light without a Candle, and perpetual Day without the Sun; for *the City has no Need of the Sun,*

(c) Heb. iv. 12. (d) Psalm xvi. 11.

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Sun, neither of the Moon to shine in it, for the Glory of God lightens it, and the Lamb is the Light thereof: There shall be no Night there, and they need no Candle, neither Light; for the Lord God giveth them Light, and they shall reign for ever and ever (e). We shall then have enlightened Understandings without Scripture, and be governed without a written Law; for the Lord will perfect his Law in our Hearts, and we shall be all perfectly taught of God. We shall have Joy, which we drew not from the Promises, nor fetch'd home by Faith or Hope. We shall have Communion without Sacraments, without *this Fruit of the Vine, when Christ shall drink it new with us in his Father's Kingdom* (f), and refresh us with the comforting Wine of immediate Enjoyment. To have Necessities, but no Supply, is the Case of them in Hell. To have Necessity supplied by Means of the Creatures, is the Case of us on Earth. To have Necessity supplied immediately from God, is the Case of the Saints in Heaven. To have no Necessity at all, is the Prerogative of God himself.

§ 8. (6) A FARTHER Excellence of this Rest is, that it will be *seasonable*. He that expects *the Fruit of his Vineyard at the Season* (g), and makes his People *like a Tree planted by the Rivers of Water, that bringeth forth his Fruit in his Season* (h), will also give them the Crown in Season. He that will have *a Word of Joy spoken in Season to him that is weary* (i), will surely cause the Time of Joy to appear in the fittest Season. They who *are not weary in well-doing, shall, if they faint not, reap in due Season* (k). If God *giveth Rain*, even to his Enemies, *both the former and the latter in his Season*, and *reserveth the appointed Weeks of Harvest, and covenants that there shall be Day and Night in their Season*

(e) Rev. xxi. 23. xxii. 5. (f) Matt. xxvi. 29. (g) Mark xii. 2.
(h) Psalm i. 3. (i) Isai. l. 4. (k) Gal. vi. 9.

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Season (l); then surely the glorious Harvest of the Saints shall not miss its Season. Doubtless he that would not stay a Day longer than his Promise, but brought *Israel* out of *Egypt* on *the self-same Day when the four hundred and thirty Years* were expired (m); neither will he fail of one Day or Hour of the fittest Season for his People's Glory. When we have had in this World a long Night of Darkness, will not the Day-breaking, and the Rising of the Sun of Righteousness, be then seasonable? When we have passed a long and tedious Journey, thro' no small Dangers, is not Home then seasonable? When we have had a long and perilous War, and received many a Wound, would not a Peace with Victory be seasonable? Men live in a continual Weariness; especially the Saints, who are most weary of that which the World cannot feel. Some weary of a blind Mind; some, of a hard Heart; some, of their daily Doubts and Fears; some, of the Want of spiritual Joys; and some, of the Sense of God's Wrath. And when a poor Christian hath desired, and prayed, and waited for Deliverance many Years, is it not then seasonable? We grudge, that we do not find a *Canaan* in the Wilderness; or the Songs of *Sion* in a strange Land; that we have not a Harbour in the main Ocean, nor our Rest in the Heat of the Day, nor Heaven before we leave the Earth; and would not all this be very unseasonable?

§ 9. (7) As this Rest will be seasonable, so it will be *suitable*. The *new Nature of the Saints* doth suit their Spirits to this Rest. Indeed their Holiness is nothing else but a Spark taken from this Element, and by the Spirit of Christ kindled in their Hearts, the Flame whereof, mindful of its own divine Original, ever tends to the Place from whence it comes. Tem-

(l) Jer. v. 24. xxxiii. 20. (m) Exod. xii. 40, 41.

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Temporal Crowns and Kingdoms could not make a Reſt for Saints. As they *were not redeemed with* ſo low a Price(n), neither are they endued with ſo low a Nature. As God will have from them a ſpiritual Worſhip, ſuited to his own ſpiritual Being, he will provide them a ſpiritual Reſt, ſuitable to their ſpiritual Nature. The Knowledge of God and his Chriſt, a delightful Complacency in that mutual Love, an everlaſting Rejoicing in the Enjoyment of our God, with a perpetual Singing of his high Praiſes; this is a Heaven for a Saint. Then we ſhall live in our own Element. We are now as the Fiſh in a Veſſel of Water, only ſo much as will keep them alive; but what is that to the Ocean? We have a little Air let into us, to afford us Breathing; but what is that to the ſweet and freſh Gales upon Mount *Sion?* We have a Beam of the Sun to lighten our Darkneſs, and a warm Ray to keep us from freezing; but then we ſhall live in its Light, and be revived by its Heat for ever.——As the Natures of Saints are, ſuch are their Deſires; and it is the *Deſires of our renewed Nature* which this Reſt is ſuited to. Whilſt our Deſires remain corrupted and miſguided, it is a far greater Mercy to deny them, yea, to deſtroy them, than to ſatisfy them: But thoſe which are ſpiritual are of his own *planting*, and he will ſurely *water* them, and *give the Increaſe*. He quickened our Hunger and Thirſt for Righteouſneſs, that he might make us happy in a full Satisfaction. *Chriſtian*, this is a Reſt after thy own Heart; it contains all that thy Heart can wiſh; that which thou longeſt, prayeſt, laboureſt for, *there* thou ſhalt find it all. Thou hadſt rather have God in Chriſt, than all the World: There thou ſhalt have him. What wouldſt thou not give for Aſſurance of his Love? There thou ſhalt have Aſſurance without Suſ-

(n) 1 Pet. i. 18.

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Suspicion. Desire what thou canst, and ask what thou wilt, as a Christian, and it shall be given thee, not only to half of the Kingdom, but to the Enjoyment both of Kingdom and King. This is a Life of Desire and Prayer, but that is a Life of Satisfaction and Enjoyment.——This Rest is very suitable to the *Saints Necessities* also, as well as to their Natures and Desires. It contains whatsoever they truly wanted; not supplying them with gross created Comforts, which, like *Saul's* Armour on *David*, are more Burthen than Benefit. It was Christ and perfect Holiness which they most needed, and with these shall they be supplied.

§ 10. (8) STILL more, this Rest will be absolutely *perfect*. We shall then have Joy without Sorrow, and Rest without Weariness. *There* is no Mixture of Corruption with our Graces, nor of Suffering with our Comfort. There are none of those Waves in that Harbour, which now so toss us up and down. To-Day we are well, To-morrow sick; To day in Esteem, To-morrow in Disgrace; To-day we have Friends, To-morrow none; nay, we have Wine and Vinegar in the same Cup. If *Revelations* raise us *to the third Heaven, the Messenger of Satan* must presently *buffet* us, and *the Thorn in the Flesh* fetch us down (o). But there is none of this Inconstancy in Heaven. If *perfect Love casteth out Fear* (p), then perfect Joy must needs cast out Sorrow, and perfect Happiness exclude all the Reliques of Misery. We shall there rest from all the Evil of *Sin*, and of *Suffering*.

§ 11. HEAVEN excludes nothing more directly than *Sin*, whether of Nature, or of Conversation. *There shall in no wise enter any Thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh Abomination, or maketh a Lye* (q). What

(o) 2 Cor. xii. 2, 7. (p) 1 John iv. 18. (q) Rev. xxi. 27.

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What need Christ at all to have died, if Heaven could have contained imperfect Souls? *For this Purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the Works of the Devil* (r). His Blood and Spirit have not done all this, to leave us after all defiled. *What Communion hath Light with Darkness? and what Concord hath Christ with Belial* (s)? *Christian*, if thou be once in Heaven, thou shalt sin no more. Is not this glad News to thee, who hast prayed, and watched against it so long? I know, if it were offered to thy Choice, thou wouldst rather chuse to be freed from Sin, than have all the World. Thou shalt have thy Desire.—That hard Heart, those vile Thoughts, which accompanied thee to every Duty, shall now be left behind for ever.—Thy Understanding shall never more be troubled with Darkness. All dark Scriptures shall be made plain; all seeming Contradictions reconciled. The poorest Christian is presently there a more perfect Divine than any here. O that happy Day, when Error shall vanish for ever! When our Understanding shall be filled with God himself, whose Light will leave no Darkness in us! His Face shall be the Scripture, where we shall read the Truth. Many a godly Man hath here, in his mistaken Zeal, been a Means to deceive and pervert his Brethren, and when he sees his own Error, cannot again tell how to undeceive them. But there we shall conspire in one Truth, as being one in him who is the Truth.—We shall also rest from all the Sin of our Will, Affection, and Conversation. We shall no more retain this rebelling Principle, which is still drawing us from God: No more be oppressed with the Power of our Corruptions, nor vexed with their Presence: No Pride, Passion, Slothfulness, Insensibility, shall enter with us; no Strangeness to God, and the Things of God;

(r) 1 John iii. 8. (s) 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15.

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God; no Coldneſs of Affections, nor Imperfection in our Love; no uneven Walking, nor grieving of the Spirit; no ſcandalous Action, nor unholy Converſation; we ſhall reſt from all theſe for ever. Then ſhall our Will correſpond to the divine Will, as Face anſwers Face in a Glaſs, and from which, as our Law and Rule, we ſhall never ſwerve. *For he that is entered into his Reſt, he alſo hath ceaſed from his own Works, as God did from his* (t).

§ 12. OUR *Sufferings* were but the Conſequences of our ſinning, and in Heaven they both ſhall ceaſe together.—We ſhall reſt from all our *Doubts of God's Love.* It ſhall no more be ſaid, that "Doubts are "like the Thiſtle, a bad Weed, but growing in "good Ground (u)." They ſhall now be weeded out, and trouble the gracious Soul no more. We ſhall hear that Kind of Language no more, "What "ſhall I do to know my State? How ſhall I know "that God is my Father? that my Heart is upright? "that Converſion is true? that Faith is ſincere? I "am afraid my Sins are unpardoned; that all I do is "Hypocriſy; that God will reject me; that he does "not hear my Prayers." All this is there turned into Praiſe.——We ſhall reſt from all *Senſe of God's Diſpleaſure.* Hell ſhall not be mixed with Heaven. At Times the gracious Soul *remembered God, and was troubled; complained, and was overwhelmed, and refuſed to be comforted*; divine *Wrath lay hard upon him, and God afflicted him with all his Waves* (w). But that bleſſed Day ſhall convince us, that though God *hid his Face from us for a Moment*, yet *with everlaſting Kindneſs will he have Mercy on us* (x).——We ſhall reſt from all *the Temptations of Satan.* What a Grief is it to a Chriſtian, tho' he yield not to the Temptation,

(t) Heb. iv. 10.
(w) Pſalm lxxvii. 2, 3. lxxxviii. 7.
(u) Dr. *John Preſton.*
(x) Iſa. liv. 8.

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tion, yet to be solicited to deny his Lord? What a Torment, to have such horrid Motions made to his Soul? such blasphemous Ideas presented to his Imagination? Sometimes cruel Thoughts of God, undervaluing Thoughts of Christ, unbelieving Thoughts of Scripture, or injurious Thoughts of Providence? To be tempted sometimes to turn to present Things, to play with the Baits of Sin, and venture on the Delights of Flesh, and sometimes to Atheism itself? Especially, when we know the Treachery of our own Hearts, ready, as Tinder, to take Fire, as soon as one of these Sparks shall fall upon them? Satan hath Power here to tempt us *in the Wilderness*, but he entereth not *the Holy City*; he may *set us on a Pinacle of the Temple* in the *earthly Jerusalem*, but the *new Jerusalem* he may not approach; he may *take us up into an exceeding high Mountain*, but the *Mount Sion* he cannot ascend; and if he could, *all the Kingdoms of the World, and the Glory of them* (y), would be a despised Bait to a Soul possessed of the Kingdom of our Lord. No, 'tis in vain for Satan to offer a Temptation more.—All our *Temptations from the World and the Flesh* shall also cease. O the hourly Dangers that we here walk in! Every Sense, and Member, is a Snare; every Creature, every Mercy, and every Duty, is a Snare to us. We can scarce open our Eyes, but we are in Danger of envying those above us, or despising those below us; of coveting the Honours and Riches of some, or beholding the Rags and Beggary of others with Pride and Unmercifulness. If we see Beauty, 'tis a Bait to Lust; if Deformity, to Loathing and Disdain; How soon do slanderous Reports, vain Jests, wanton Speeches, creep into the Heart! How constant and strong a Watch does our Appetite require! Have we Comeliness and Beauty? What Fuel for Pride! Are we deformed? What an

D Occasion

(y) Mat. iv, 1, 5, 8,

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Occasion of repining! Have we Strength of Reason, and Gifts of Learning? O how prone to be puft up, hunt after Applause, and despise our Brethren! Are we unlearned? How apt then to despise what we have not! Are we in Places of Authority? How strong is the Temptation to abuse our Trust, make our Will our Law, and cut out all the Enjoyments of others by the Rules and Model of our own Interest and Policy! Are we Inferiors? How prone to grudge at others Preeminence, and bring their Actions to the Bar of our Judgment! Are we rich, and not too much exalted? Are we poor, and not discontented? Are we not lazy in our Duties, or make a Christ of them? Not that God hath made all these Things our Snares; but thro' our own Corruption they become so to us. Ourselves are the greatest Snare to Ourselves. This is our Comfort, our Rest will free us from all these. As Satan hath no Entrance there, so neither any Thing to serve his Malice; but all Things there shall join with us in the high Praises of our great Deliverer.—As we rest from the Temptations, we shall likewise from *the Abuses and Persecutions of the World.* The Prayers of *the Souls under the Altar* will then be answered, and God will *avenge their Blood on them that dwell on the Earth*(z). *This* is the Time for crowning with Thorns; *that* for crowning with Glory. *Now, all that will live Godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer Persecution* (a): *then*, they *that suffered with him*, shall *be glorified with him* (b). *Now*, we must *be hated of all Men for Christ's Name Sake* (c): *Then*, Christ will *be admired in his Saints* that were thus hated (d). *We are* here *made a Spectacle unto the World, and to Angels, and to Men; as the Filth of the World, and the Offscouring of all Things* (e); *Men separate us from*

(z) Rev. vi. 9, 10. (a) 2 Tim. iii. 12 (b) Rom. viii. 17.
(c) Mat. x. 22. (d) 2 Thess. i. 10. (e) 1 Cor. iv. 9, 13.
(f) Luke vi. 22.

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from their Company, and reproach us, and cast out our Names as evil (f); But we shall then be as much gazed at for our Glory, and they will be shut out of the Church of the Saints, and separated from us, whether they will or no. We can now scarce pray in our Families, or sing Praises to God, but our Voice is a Vexation to them: How must it torment them then, to see us praising and rejoicing, while they are howling and lamenting! You, *Brethren*, who can now attempt no Work of God without losing the Love of the World, consider, you shall have none in Heaven but will further your Work, and join Heart and Voice with you in your everlasting Joy and Praise. Till then, *possess ye your Souls in Patience* (g). Bind all Reproaches as a Crown to your Heads. Esteem them greater Riches than the World's Treasures. *It is a Righteous Thing with God to recompence Tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you, who are troubled, Rest with Christ* (h).—We shall then rest from all *our sad Divisions, and unchristian Quarrels with one another.* How lovingly do Thousands live together in Heaven, who lived at Variance upon Earth! There is no Contention, because none of this Pride, Ignorance, or other Corruption. There is no plotting to strengthen our Party, nor deep designing against our Brethren. If there be Sorrow or Shame in Heaven, we shall then be both sorry and ashamed, to remember all this Carriage on Earth; as *Joseph*'s Brethren were to behold him, when they remembred their former unkind Usage. Is it not enough that all the World is against us, but we must also be against one another? O happy Days of Persecution, which drove us together in Love, whom the Sun-shine of Liberty and Prosperity crumbles into Dust by our Contentions! O happy Day of the Saint's Rest in Glory, when, as there is one God,

(g) Luke xxi. 19. (h) 2 Thess. i. 6, 7.

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one Christ, one Spirit, so we shall have one Heart, one Church, one Employment for ever! —We shall then rest from *our Participation of our Brethren's Sufferings*. The Church on Earth is a mere Hospital; some groaning under a dark Understanding, some under an insensible Heart, some languishing under unfruitful Weakness, and some bleeding for Miscarriages and Wilfulness, some crying out of their Poverty, some groaning under Pains and Infirmities, and some bewailing a whole Catalogue of Calamities. But a far greater Grief it is, to see our dearest and most intimate Friends turned aside from the Truth of Christ, continuing their Neglect of Christ and their Souls, and nothing will awaken them out of their Security: To look on an ungodly Father or Mother, Brother or Sister, Wife or Husband, Child or Friend, and think how certainly they shall be in Hell for ever, if they die in their present unregenerate State: To think of the *Gospel* departing, the Glory taken from our *Israel*, poor Souls left willingly dark and destitute, and blowing out the Light that should guide them to Salvation! Our Day of Rest will free us from all this, *and the Days of mourning shall be ended*; then *thy People*, O Lord, *shall be all righteous*; *they shall inherit the Land for ever*, *the Branch of thy planting*, *the Work of thy Hands*, *that thou mayst be glorified* (i).——Then we shall rest from all *our own personal Sufferings*. This may seem a small Thing to those that live in Ease and Prosperity; but to the daily-afflicted Soul it makes the Thoughts of Heaven delightful. O the dying Life we now live! as full of Sufferings as of Days and Hours! Our Redeemer leaves this Measure of Misery upon us, to make us know for what we are beholden, to mind us of what we should else forget, to be serviceable to his wise and gracious Designs, and advantageous to our

(i) Isaiah lx. 20, 21.

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our full and final Recovery. Grief enters at every Sense, seizes every Part and Power of Flesh and Spirit. What noble Part is there, that suffereth its Pain or Ruin alone? But Sin and Flesh, Dust and Pain, will all be left behind together. O the blessed Tranquillity of that Region, where there is nothing but sweet, continued Peace! O healthful Place, where none are sick! O fortunate Land, where all are Kings! O holy Assembly, where all are Priests! How free a State, where none are Servants, but to their supreme Monarch! The poor Man shall no more be tired with his Labours: *No more Hunger or Thirst*, Cold or Nakedness: No pinching Frosts or scorching Heats. Our Faces shall no more be pale or sad: No more Breaches in Friendship, nor parting of Friends asunder; no more Trouble accompanying our Relations, nor Voice of Lamentation heard in our Dwellings: *God shall wipe away all Tears from our Eyes*(k). O my Soul, bear with the Infirmities of thine earthly Tabernacle; it will be thus but a little while; *the Sound of* thy Redeemer's *Feet is even at the Door.*——We shall also rest from all *the Toil of Duties.* The conscientious Magistrate, Parent, and Minister, cries out "O the Burthen that "lieth upon me!" Every Relation, State, Age, hath Variety of Duties; so that every conscientious Christian cries out "O the Burthen! O my Weakness that "makes it burthensome! But our remaining Rest will ease us of the Burthen.—Once more, we shall rest from all *those troublesome Affections which necessarily accompany our Absence from God.* The Trouble that is mixt in our Desires and Hopes, our Longings and Waitings, shall then cease. We shall no more look into our Cabinet, and miss our Treasure; into our Hearts, and miss our Christ; no more seek him from Ordinance to Ordinance; but all be concluded in a most full and blessed Enjoyment.

(k) Rev. vii. 16, 17.

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§ 13. (9) THE laſt Jewel of our Crown is, that it will be an *everlaſting* Reſt. Without this all were comparitively Nothing. The very Thought of leaving it, would embitter all our Joys. It would be a Hell in Heaven, to think of once loſing Heaven: As it would be a Kind of Heaven to the Damned, had they but Hopes of once eſcaping. Mortality is the Diſgrace of all ſublunary Delights. How it ſpoils our Pleaſure, to ſee it dying in our Hands! But O bleſſed Eternity! where our Lives are perplexed with no ſuch Thoughts, nor our Joys interrupted with any ſuch Fears! where we ſhall be *Pillars in the Temple of our God, and go no more out* (l). While we were *Servants*, we held by Leaſe, and that but for the Term of a tranſitory Life; *but the Son abideth in the Houſe for ever* (m). "O my Soul, let go thy Dreams of preſent Pleaſures, and looſe thy Hold of Earth and Fleſh. Study frequently, Study thoroughly, this one Word, *Eternity*. What! Live, and never die! Rejoice, and ever rejoice!" O happy Souls in Hell, ſhould you but eſcape, after Millions of Ages! O miſerable Saints in Heaven, ſhould you be diſpoſeſſed, after the Age of a Million of Worlds! This Word, *everlaſting*, contains the Perfection of their Torment, and our Glory. O that the Sinner would ſtudy this Word, methinks it would ſtartle him out of his dead Sleep! O that the gracious Soul would ſtudy it, methinks it ſhould revive him in his deepeſt Agony! "And muſt I, Lord, thus live for ever? Then will I alſo love for ever. Muſt my Joys be immortal? And ſhall not my Thanks be alſo immortal? Surely, if I ſhall never loſe my Glory, I will never ceaſe thy Praiſes. If thou wilt both perfect, and perpetuate me and my Glory; as I ſhall be thine, and not my own; ſo ſhall my Glory be thy Glory. "And

(l) Rev. iii. 12. (m) John viii, 35.

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" And as thy Glory was thy ultimate End in my " Glory; so shall it also be my End, when thou hast " crowned me with that Glory which hath no End. " *Unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only* " *wise God, be Honour and Glory, for ever and ever.* " *Amen* (n)."

§ 14. THUS I have endeavoured to shew you a Glimpse of approaching Glory. But how short are my Expressions of its Excellency! *Reader*, if thou be an humble sincere Believer, and waitest with Longing and Labouring for this Rest, thou wilt shortly see, and feel, the Truth of all this. Thou wilt then have so high an Apprehension of this blessed State, as will make thee pity the Ignorance and Distance of Mortals, and will tell thee, all that is here said falls short of the whole Truth a Thousand-fold. In the mean Time, let this much kindle thy Desires and quicken thy Endeavours: Up and be doing, run, and strive, and fight, and hold on; for thou hast a certain, glorious Prize before thee. God will not mock thee; do not mock thyself, nor betray thy Soul by delaying, and all is thine own. What Kind of Men, dost thou think, would Christians be in their Lives and Duties, if they had still this Glory fresh in their Thoughts? What Frame would their Spirits be in, if their Thoughts of Heaven were lively and believing? Would their Hearts be so heavy? their Countenances be so sad? or would they have need to take up their Comforts from below? Would they be so loth to suffer? so afraid to die? or would they not think every Day a Year till they enjoy it? May the Lord heal our carnal Hearts, lest we *enter not into this Rest, because of Unbelief* (o)!

(n) 1 Tim. i. 17. (o) Heb. iii. 19.

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CHAP. IV.

The Character of the Persons for whom this Rest is designed.

§ 1. *'Tis wonderful that such Rest should be designed for Mortals.* § 2. *The People of God, who shall enjoy this Rest, are* (1) *chosen from Eternity.* § 3. (2) *Given to Christ.* § 4. (3) *Born again.* § 5—8. (4) *Deeply convinced of the Evil of Sin, their Misery by Sin, the Vanity of the Creature, and the All-sufficiency of Christ.* § 9. (5) *Their Will is proportionably changed.* § 10. (6) *They engage in Covenant with Christ.* § 11. *And* (7) *They persevere in their Engagements.* § 12. *The Reader invited to examine himself by these Characteristicks of God's People.* § 13. *Further Testimony from Scripture that this Rest shall be enjoyed by the People of God.* § 14. *Also that none but they shall enjoy it.* § 15—16. *And that it remains for them, and is not to be enjoyed till they come to another World.* § 17. *The Chapter concludes with shewing, that their Souls shall enjoy this Rest while separated from their Bodies.*

§ 1. WHILE I was in the Mount, describing the Excellencies of the *Saint's Rest*, I felt it was good being there, and therefore tarried the longer; and was there not an extreme Disproportion between my Conceptions and the Subject, much longer had I been. Can a Prospect of that happy Land be tedious? Having read of such an high and unspeaka-

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unspeakable Glory, a Stranger would wonder for what rare Creature this mighty Preparation should be made, and expect some illustrious Sun should break forth. But behold! only a Shell full of Dust, animated with an invisible, rational Soul, and that rectified with as unseen a restored Power of Grace; and this is the Creature that must possess such Glory. You would think it must needs be some deserving Piece, or one that brings a valuable Price: But behold! One that hath Nothing, and can deserve Nothing; yea, that deserves the contrary, and would, if he might, proceed in that Deserving; but being apprehended by Love, he is brought to him that *is All* (a); and most affectionately receiving him, and resting on him, he doth, in and thro' him, receive All this. More particularly the Persons, for whom this Rest is designed, are—*chosen of God from Eternity*;—*given to Christ, as their Redeemer*;—*born again*;—*deeply convinced of the Evil and Misery of a sinful State, the Vanity of the Creature, and the All-sufficiency of Christ*;—*their Will is renewed*;—*they engage themselves to Christ in Covenant*;—and *they persevere in their Engagements to the End.*

§ 2. (1) THE Persons for whom this Rest is designed, whom the Text calls *the People of God*, are *the Chosen of God from Eternity* (b). That they are but a small Part of Mankind, is too apparent in Scripture and Experience. They are the *little Flock*, to whom *it is their Father's good Pleasure to give the Kingdom* (c). Fewer they are than the World imagines; yet not so few as some drooping Spirits think, who are suspicious that God is unwilling to be their God, when they know themselves willing to be his People.

§ 3. (2) THESE Persons are *given of God to his Son, to be by him redeemed from their lost State, and advanced*

(a) Col. iii. 11. (b) Ephes. i. 4, 5. (c) Luke xii. 32.

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vanced to this Glory. God hath given all Things to his Son, but not as he hath given his Chosen to him. *God hath given him Power over all Flesh, that he should give eternal Life to as many as the Father hath given him* (d). The Difference is clearly expressed by the *Apostle*; *he hath put all Things under his Feet, and gave him to be the Head over all Things to the Church* (e). And tho' Christ is, in some Sense, *a Ransom for all* (f), yet not in that special Manner as for his People.

§ 4. (3) ONE great Qualification of these Persons is, that they are *born again* (g). To be the People of God without Regeneration, is as impossible as to be the Children of Men without Generation. Seeing we are born God's Enemies, we must be new-born his Sons, or else remain Enemies still. The greatest Reformation of Life that can be attained to, without this new Life wrought in the Soul, may procure our farther Delusion, but never our Salvation.

§ 5. (4) THIS new Life in the People of God discovers itself by *Conviction*, or *a deep Sense of divine Things*. As for Instance—They are convinced of *the Evil of Sin*. The Sinner is made to know and feel, that the Sin, which was his Delight, is a more loathsome Thing than a Toad or Serpent, and a greater Evil than Plague or Famine; being a Breach of the righteous Law of the Most High God, dishonourable to him, and destructive to the Sinner. Now the Sinner no more hears the Reproofs of Sin, as Words of Course; but the Mention of his Sin speaks to his very Heart, and yet he is contented you should shew him the worst. He was wont to marvel, what made Men keep such a Stir against Sin; what Harm it was for a Man to take a little forbidden Pleasure; he saw no such Heinousness in it, that Christ must needs die for

(d) John xvii. 2. (e) Ephes. i. 22.
(f) 1 Tim. ii. 6. (g) John iii. 3.

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for it, and a Christless World be eternally tormented in Hell. Now the Case is altered, God hath opened his Eyes to see the inexpressible Vileness in Sin.

§ 6. THEY are convinced of *their own Misery by Reason of Sin.* They who before read the Threats of God's Law, as Men do the Story of foreign Wars, now find it their own Story, and perceive they read their own Doom; as if they found their Names written in the Curse, or heard the Law say, as *Nathan, Thou art the Man* (h). The Wrath of God seemed to him before, but as a Storm to a Man in a dry House, or as the Pains of the Sick to the healthful Stander-by; but now he finds the Disease is his own, and feels himself a condemned Man, that he is dead and damned in Point of Law, and that nothing was wanting but mere Execution to make him absolutely and irrecoverably miserable. This is a Work of the Spirit, wrought in some Measure in all the Regenerate. How should he come to Christ for Pardon, that did not first find himself guilty, and condemned? or for Life, that never found himself spiritually dead? *The Whole need not a Physician, but they that are sick* (i). The Discovery of the Remedy, as soon as the Misery, must needs prevent a great Part of the Trouble. And perhaps the joyful Apprehensions of Mercy may make the Sense of Misery sooner forgotten.

§ 7. THEY are also convinced of *the Creature's Vanity and Insufficiency.* Every Man is naturally an Idolater. Our Hearts turned from God in our first Fall, and ever since the Creature hath been our God. This is the grand Sin of Nature. Every unregenerate Man ascribes to the Creature divine Prerogatives, and allows it the highest Room in his Soul; or if he is convinced of Misery, he flies to it as his Saviour. Indeed, God and His Christ shall be called Lord and

(h) 2 Sam. xii. 7. (i) Luke v. 31.

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Saviour; but the real Expectation is from the Creature, and the Work of God is laid upon it. Pleasure, Profit, and Honour, are the natural Man's Trinity, and his carnal Self is these in Unity. It was our first Sin, to aspire to be as Gods; and it is the greatest Sin that is propagated in our Nature from Generation to Generation. When God should guide us, we guide ourselves; when he should be our Sovereign, we rule ourselves; the Laws which he gives us we find Fault with, and would correct; and if we had the making of them, we would have made them otherwise; when he should take Care of us, (and must, or we perish) we will care for ourselves; when we should depend on him in daily Receivings, we had rather have our Portion in our own Hands; when we should submit to his Providence, we usually quarrel at it, and think we could make a better Disposal than God hath made. When we should study and love, trust and honour God, we study and love, trust and honour, our carnal Selves. Instead of God, we would have all Mens Eyes and Dependance on us, and all Mens Thanks returned to us, and would gladly be the only Men on Earth extolled and admired by all. Thus we are naturally our own Idols. But down falls this *Dagon*, when God does once renew the Soul. It is the chief Design of that great Work, to bring the Heart back to God himself. He convinceth the Sinner, that the Creature can neither be his God, to make him happy, nor his Christ, to recover him from his Misery, and restore him to God, who is his Happiness. God doth this, not only by his Word, but by Providence also. This is the Reason, why Affliction so frequently concurs in the Work of Conversion. Arguments which speak to the quick, will force a Hearing, when the most powerful Words are slighted. If a Sinner make his Credit his God, and God shall call him

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him into the lowest Disgrace, or bring him, who idolized his Riches, into a Condition wherein they cannot help him; or cause them to take Wing, and fly away; what a Help is here to this Work of Conviction? If a Man made Pleasure his God, whatsoever a roving Eye, a curious Ear, a greedy Appetite, or a lustful Heart could desire, and God should take these from him, or turn them into Gall and Wormwood; what a Help is here to Conviction? When God shall cast a Man into languishing Sickness, and inflict Wounds on his Heart, and stir up against him his own Conscience, and then, as it were, say to him, "Try if your Credit, Riches, or Pleasures, can help "you. Can they heal your wounded Conscience? "Can they now support your tottering Tabernacle? "Can they keep your departing Soul in your Body? "or save you from mine everlasting Wrath? or "redeem your Soul from eternal Flames? Cry aloud "to them, and see now whether these will be to you "instead of God and his Christ." O how this works now with the Sinner! Sense acknowledges the Truth, and even the Flesh is convinced of the Creature's Vanity, and our very Deceiver is undeceived.

§ 8. —THE People of God are likewise convinced of *the absolute Necessity, the full Sufficiency, and perfect Excellency of Jesus Christ:* As a Man in Famine is convinced of the Necessity of Food; or a Man that had heard, or read, his Sentence of Condemnation, of the absolute Necessity of Pardon; or a Man that lies in Prison for Debt, is convinced of his Need of a Surety to discharge it. Now the Sinner feels an insupportable Burthen upon him, and sees there is none but Christ can take it off. He perceives the Law proclaims him a Rebel, and none but Christ can make his Peace. He is as a Man pursued by a Lion, that must perish, if he finds not a present Sanctuary.

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He is now brought to this Dilemma; either he must have Christ to justify him, or be eternally condemned; have Christ to save him, or burn in Hell for ever; have Christ to bring him to God, or be shut out of his Presence everlastingly. And no Wonder if he cry, as the Martyr, "None but Christ, none but "Christ." Not Gold, but Bread, will satisfy the Hungry; nor any Thing but Pardon will comfort the Condemned. *All Things* are *counted but Dung* now, *that he may win Christ*; *and what was Gain*, he *counts Loss for Christ* (k). As the Sinner sees his Misery, and the Inability of himself, and all Things to relieve him, so he perceives there is no saving Mercy out of Christ. He sees, though the Creature cannot, and himself cannot, yet Christ can. Though the Fig-Leaves of our own unrighteous Righteousness are too short to cover our Nakedness, yet the Righteousness of Christ is large enough: Ours is disproportionate to the Justice of the Law, but Christ's extends to every Tittle. If He intercede, there is no Denial; such is the Dignity of His Person, and the Value of His Merits, that the Father grants all He desires. Before, the Sinner knew Christ's Excellency, as a blind Man knows the Light of the Sun; but now, as one that beholds its Glory.

§ 9. (5) AFTER this deep Conviction, *the Will discovers also its Change.* As for Instance.—The *Sin*, which the Understanding pronounces evil, *the Will turns from with Abhorrence.* Not that the sensitive Appetite is changed, or any Way made to abhor its Object: But when it would prevail against Reason, and carry us to sin against God, instead of Scripture being the Rule, and Reason the Master, and Sense the Servant; this Disorder and Evil, the Will abhors. —The *Misery* also which Sin hath procured, *is not only discerned*

(k) Phil. iii. 7, 8.

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discerned, but bewailed. It is impossible that the Soul should now look, either on its Trespass against God, or yet on its own self procured Calamity, without some Contrition. He that truly discerns that he hath killed Christ, and killed himself, will surely in some Measure be *pricked to the Heart* (l). If he cannot weep, he can heartily groan; and his Heart feels what his Understanding sees.——*The Creature is renounced as Vanity, and turned out of the Heart with Disdain.* Not that it is undervalued, or the Use of it disclaimed; but its idolatrous Abuse, and its unjust Usurpation. Can Christ be the Way, where the Creature is the End? Can we seek to Christ to reconcile us to God, while in our Hearts we prefer the Creature before him? In the Soul of every unregenerate Man, the Creature is both God and Christ. As turning from the Creature to God, and not by Christ, is no true turning; so believing in Christ, while the Creature hath our Hearts, is no true believing. Our Aversion from Sin, renouncing our Idols, and our right receiving Christ, is all but one Work, which God ever perfects where he begins.——At the same Time *the Will cleaves to God the Father, and to Christ.* Having been convinced, that nothing else can be his Happiness, the Sinner now finds it is in God. Convinced also, that Christ alone is able and willing to make Peace for him, he most affectionately accepts of Christ for Saviour and Lord. *Paul's* Preaching was *Repentance toward God, and Faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ* (m). *And Life eternal* consists first in *knowing the only true God, and* then *Jesus Christ whom he hath sent* (n). To take the Lord for our God, is the natural Part of the Covenant; the supernatural Part is, to take Christ for our Redeemer. The former is first necessary, and implied in the latter. To accept

(l) Acts ii. 37. (m) Acts xx. 21. (n) John xvii. 3.

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cept Christ without Affection and Love, is not justifying Faith. Nor does Love follow as a Fruit, but immediately concurs; for Faith is the receiving of Christ with the whole Soul. *He that loveth Father or Mother more than Christ, is not worthy of him* (o), nor is justified by him. Faith accepts him for Saviour and Lord: For in both Relations will he be received, or not at all. Faith not only acknowledges his Sufferings, and accepts of Pardon and Glory; but acknowledges his Sovereignty, and submits to his Government and Way of Salvation.

§ 10. (6) As an essential Part of the Character of God's People, *they now enter into a cordial Covenant with Christ.* The Sinner was never strictly, nor comfortably, in Covenant with Christ till now. He is sure, by the free Offers, that Christ consents; and now he cordially consents himself; and so the Agreement is fully made.—With this Covenant Christ delivers up himself in all comfortable Relations to the Sinner; and the Sinner delivers up himself, to be saved, and ruled by Christ. Now the Soul resolutely concludes, "I have been blindly led by Flesh and "Lust, by the World and the Devil, too long, al-"most to my utter Destruction: I will now be wholly "at the Disposal of my Lord, who hath bought me "with his Blood, and will bring me to his Glory."

§ 11. (7) I ADD, that *the People of God persevere in this Covenant to the End.* Though the Believer may commit Sins, yet he never disclaims his Lord, renounces his Allegiance, nor repents of his Covenant; nor can he properly be said to break that Covenant, while that Faith continues, which is the Condition of it. Indeed, those that have *verbally* covenanted, and not *cordially*, may *tread under Foot the Blood of the Covenant*, as *an unholy Thing*, *wherewith they were* sanctified

(o) Matt. x. 37.

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sanctified by Separation from those without the Church (p); but *the Elect* cannot be so *deceived* (q). Though this Perseverance be certain to true Believers, yet it is made a Condition of their Salvation, yea, of their continued Life and Fruitfulness, and of the Continuance of their Justification, though not of their first Justification itself (r). But eternally blessed be that Hand of Love, which hath drawn the free Promise, and subscribed and sealed to that which ascertains us, both of the Grace which is the Condition, and the Kingdom which on that Condition is offered.

§ 12. SUCH are the Essentials of this People of God: Not a full Portraiture of them in all their Excellencies, nor all the Notes whereby they may be discerned. I beseech thee, *Reader*, as thou hast the Hope of a Christian, or the Reason of a Man, judge thyself, as one that must shortly be judged by a righteous God, and faithfully answer these Questions. I will not enquire whether thou remember the Time or the Order of these Workings of the Spirit; there may be much Uncertainty and Mistake in that: If thou art sure they are wrought in thee, the Matter is not so great, tho' thou know not when or how thou camest by them. But carefully examine and enquire, hast thou been thoroughly convinced of a prevailing Depravation thro' thy whole Soul? and a prevailing Wickedness thro' thy whole Life? and how vile Sin is? and that, by the Covenant thou hast transgressed, the least Sin deserves eternal Death? Dost thou consent to the Law, that it is true and righteous, and perceive thyself sentenced to this Death by it? Hast thou seen the utter Insufficiency of every Creature, either to be itself thy Happiness, or the Means of removing this

(p) Heb. x. 29. (q) Matt. xxiv. 24. (r) John xv. 4, 6, viii. 31. Rev. ii. 25, 26. iii. 11, 12. Col. i. 23. Rom. xi

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this thy Misery? Hast thou been convinced, that thy Happiness is only in God, as the End; and in Christ, as the Way to him? and that thou must be brought to God through Christ, or perish eternally? Hast thou seen an absolute Necessity of thy enjoying Christ, and the full Sufficiency in him, to do for thee whatsoever thy Case requires? Hast thou discovered the Excellency of this *Pearl*, to be worth thy *selling all to buy it* (s)? Have thy Convictions been like those of a Man that thirsts; and not merely a Change in Opinion, produced by Reading, or Education? Have both thy Sin and Misery been the Abhorrence and Burthen of thy Soul? If thou couldst not weep, yet couldst thou heartily groan under the insupportable Weight of both? Hast thou renounced all thy own Righteousness? Hast thou turned thy Idols out of thy Heart, so that the Creature hath no more the Sovereignty, but is now a Servant to God and Christ? Dost thou accept of Christ as thy only Saviour, and expect thy Justification, Recovery, and Glory, from him alone? Are his Laws the most powerful Commanders of thy Life and Soul? Do they ordinarily prevail against the Commands of the Flesh, and against the greatest Interest of thy Credit, Profit, Pleasure, or Life? Has Christ the highest Room in thy Heart and Affections, that though thou canst not love him as thou wouldst, yet nothing else is loved so much? Hast thou to this End made a hearty Covenant with him, and delivered up thyself to him? Is it thy utmost Care and watchful Endeavour, that thou mayst be found faithful in this Covenant; and though thou fall into Sin, yet wouldst not renounce thy Bargain, nor change thy Lord, nor give up thyself to any other Government for all the World?——If this be truly thy Case, thou art one of the

(s) Matt. xiii. 45.

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the People of God in my Text; and as sure as the Promise of God is true, this blessed Rest remains for thee. Only see thou *abide in Christ* (t), and *endure to the End* (u); for *if any Man draw back, His Soul shall have no Pleasure in him* (w).—But if no such Work be found within thee; whatever thy deceived Heart may think, or how strong soever thy false Hopes may be; thou wilt find to thy Cost, except thorough Conversion prevent it, that the Rest of the Saints belongs not to thee. *O that thou wert wise, that thou wouldst understand this, that thou wouldst consider thy latter End* (x)! That yet, while thy Soul is in thy Body, and *a Price in thy Hand* (y), and Opportunity and Hope before thee, thine Ears may be open, and thy Heart yield to the Persuasions of God, that so thou mightest rest among his People, and enjoy *the Inheritance of the Saints in Light* (z)!

§ 13. THAT *this Rest shall be enjoyed by the People of God*, is a Truth which the Scripture, if its Testimony be further needed, clearly asserts in a variety of Ways. As for Instance.—That they are *foreordained to it, and it for them. God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a City* (a). They are stiled *Vessels of Mercy, afore prepared unto Glory* (b). *In Christ they have obtained an Inheritance, being predestinated according to the Purpose of him who worketh all Things after the Counsel of his own Will* (c). And *whom he did predestinate, them he also glorified* (d). Who can bereave his People of that Rest which is designed for them by God's eternal Purpose?—Scripture tells us, they are *redeemed to this Rest. By the Blood of Jesus we have Boldness to enter into the Holi-*

est;

(t) John xv. 4.
(u) Matt. xxiv. 13.
(w) Heb. x. 38.
(x) Deut. xxxii. 29.
(y) Prov. xvii. 16.
(z) Col. i. 12.
(a) Heb. xi. 16.
(b) Rom. ix. 23.
(c) Ephes. i. 11.
(d) Rom. viii. 30.

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rest (e); whether that Entrance means by Faith and Prayer here, or by full Poſſeſſion hereafter. Therefore *the Saints* in Heaven *ſing a new Song* unto him who *has redeemed them to God by his Blood, out of every Kindred, and Tongue, and People, and Nation, and made them Kings and Prieſts unto God* (f). Either Chriſt then muſt loſe his Blood and Sufferings, and never *ſee of the Travail of his Soul*, or elſe *there remaineth a Reſt to the People of God.*——In Scripture this Reſt is *promiſed to them.* As the Firmament with Stars, ſo are the ſacred Pages beſpangled with theſe divine Engagements. Chriſt ſays, *fear not, little Flock, for it is your Father's good Pleaſure to give you the Kingdom* (g). *I appoint unto you a Kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink at my Table in my Kingdom* (h). *&c. &c. &c.*—All the *Means of Grace, the Operations of the Spirit upon the Soul*, and *gracious Actings of the Saints, every Command* to repent and believe, to faſt and pray, to knock and ſeek, to ſtrive and labour, to run and fight, prove that there remains a Reſt for the People of God. The Spirit would never kindle in us ſuch ſtrong Deſires after Heaven, ſuch Love to Jeſus Chriſt, if we ſhould not receive what we deſire and love. He that *guides our Feet into the Way of Peace* (i), will undoubtedly bring us to the End of Peace. How nearly is the Means and End conjoined? *The Kingdom of Heaven ſuffereth Violence, and the violent take it by Force* (k). They that *follow Chriſt in the Regeneration, ſhall ſit upon Thrones of Glory* (l).—Scripture aſſures us, that the Saints have the *Beginnings, Foretaſts, Earneſts, and Seals* of this Reſt here. *The Kingdom of God is within them* (m). *Tho' they have not ſeen Chriſt, yet loving him, and believing in him, they rejoice with*

Joy

(e) Heb. x. 19. (f) Rev. v. 8--10. (g) Luke xii. 32.
(h) Luke xxii. 29, 30. (i) Luke i. 79. (k) Matt. xi. 12.
(l) Matt. xix. 28. (m) Luke xvii. 21.

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Joy unspeakable and full of Glory; receiving the End of their Faith, even the Salvation of their Souls (n). They *rejoice in Hope of the Glory of God* (o). And does God *seal them with that holy Spirit of Promise, which is the Earnest of their Inheritance*, and will he deny the full *Possession* (p)?——The Scripture also mentions, by Name, *those who have entered* into this Rest. As *Enoch*, *Abraham*, *Lazarus*, the *Thief* that was crucified with Christ, &c. And if there be a Rest for these, sure there is a Rest for all Believers. But it is vain to heap up Scripture-Proof, seeing it is the very End of Scripture, to be a Guide to lead us to this blessed State, and to be the Charter and Grant by which we hold all our Title to it.

§ 14. SCRIPTURE not only proves, that this Rest remains for the People of God, but also that *it remains for none but them*, so that the rest of the World shall have no Part in it. *Without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord* (q). *Except a Man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God. He that believeth not the Son shall not see Life, but the Wrath of God abideth on him* (r). *No Whoremonger, nor unclean Person, nor covetous Man, who is an Idolater, hath any Inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ, and of God* (s). *The wicked shall be turned into Hell, and all the Nations that forget God* (t). *They all shall be damned, who believe not the Truth, but have Pleasure in Unrighteousness* (u). *The Lord Jesus shall come in flaming Fire, to take Vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting Destruction from the Presence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his Power* (w). Had the Ungodly returned before their Life was expired, and been heartily willing

(n) 1 Pet. i. 8, 9. (o) Rom. v. 2. (p) Ephes. i. 13, 14.
(q) Heb. xii. 14. (r) John iii. 3, 36. (s) Ephes. v. 5.
(t) Psalm ix. 17. (u) 2 Thess. ii. 12. (w) 2 Thess. i. 7--9.

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ſing to accept of Chriſt for their Saviour and their King, and to be ſaved by him in his Way, and upon his moſt reaſonable Terms, they might have been ſaved. God freely offered them Life, and they would not accept it. The Pleaſures of the Fleſh ſeemed more deſirable to them than the Glory of the Saints. Satan offered them the one, and God offered them the other, and they had free Liberty to chuſe which they would, and they choſe *the Pleaſures of Sin for a Seaſon*, before the everlaſting Reſt with Chriſt. And is it not a righteous Thing, that they ſhould be denied that, which they would not accept? When God preſt them ſo earneſtly, and perſuaded them ſo importunately, to come in, and yet they would not, where ſhould they be but among the *Dogs without?* Tho' Man be ſo wicked, that he will not yield till the mighty Power of Grace prevail with him, yet ſtill we may truly ſay, that he may be ſaved, if he will, on God's Terms. His Inability, being Moral, and lying in wilfull Wickedneſs, is no more Excuſe to him, than it is to an Adulterer, that he *cannot* love his own Wife, or to a malicious Perſon, that he *cannot* but hate his own Brother: Is he not ſo much the worſe, and deſerving of ſo much the ſorer Puniſhment? Sinners ſhall lay all the Blame on their own Wills in Hell for ever. Hell is a rational Torment by Conſcience, according to the Nature of the rational Subject. If Sinners could but then ſay, *it was long of God, and not of us*, it would quiet their Conſciences, and eaſe their Torments, and make Hell to them to be no Hell. But to remember their Wilfulneſs, will feed the Fire, and cauſe *the Worm* of Conſcience *never to die* (x).

§ 15. *It is the Will of God, that this Reſt ſhould yet remain for his People, and not be enjoyed till they come to*

(x) Mark ix. 44.

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to another World.—Who should dispose of the Greatures, but he that made them? You may as well ask, why have we not Spring and Harvest without Winter? or, why is the Earth below, and the Heavens above, as, why we have not Rest on Earth? All Things must come to their Perfection by Degrees. The strongest Man must first be a Child. The greatest Scholar must first begin in his Alphabet The tallest Oak was once an Acorn. This Life is our Infancy; and would we be perfect in the Womb, or born at full Stature?——If our Rest was here, most of God's Providences must be useless. Should God lose the Glory of his Church's miraculous Deliverances, and the Fall of his Enemies, that Men may have their Happiness here? If we were all happy, innocent, and perfect, what Use were there for the glorious Works of our Sanctification, Justification, and future Salvation?——If we wanted nothing, we should not depend on God so closely, nor call upon him so earnestly. How little should he hear from us, if we had what we would have? God would never have had such Songs of Praise from *Moses* at the Red Sea and in the Wilderness, from *Deborah* and *Hannah*, from *David* and *Hezekiah*, if they had been the Chusers of their own Condition. Have not thy own highest Praises to God, *Reader*, been occasioned by thy Dangers or Miseries? The greatest Glory and Praise God has through the World, is for Redemption, Reconciliation, and Salvation by Christ; and was not Man's Misery the Occasion of that?—And where God loses the Opportunity of exercising his Mercies, Man must needs lose the Happiness of enjoying them. Where God loses his Praise, Man will certainly lose his Comforts. Oh the sweet Comforts the Saints have had in Return to their Prayers! How should we know what a tender-hearted Father we have,

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have, if we had not, as the Prodigal, been denied the Husks of earthly Pleasure and Profit? We should never have felt Christ's tender Heart, if we had not felt ourselves *weary and heavy laden, hungry and thirsty, poor and contrite.* It is a Delight to a Soldier, or Traveller, to look back on his Escapes when they are over: And for a Saint in Heaven to look back on his Sins and Sorrows upon Earth, his Fears and Tears, his Enemies and Dangers, his Wants and Calamities, must make his Joy more joyful. Therefore the Blessed, in praising the Lamb, mention his *redeeming them out of every Nation, and Kindred, and Tongue*; and so out of their Misery, and Wants, and Sins, *and making them Kings and Priests to God.* But if they had had nothing but Content and Rest on Earth, what Room would there have been for these Rejoicings hereafter?

§ 16. BESIDES, *we are not capable of Rest upon Earth.*——Can a *Soul* that is so *weak in Grace*, so *prone to Sin*, so nearly *joined to such a Neighbour* as this Flesh, have full Content and Rest in such a Case? What is Soul-Rest, but our Freedom from Sin, and Imperfections, and Enemies? And can the Soul have Rest that is pestered with all these, and that continually? Why do Christians so oft cry out in the Language of *Paul, O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me* (y)*?* What makes them *press towards the Mark*, and *run that they may obtain*, and *strive to enter in*, if they are capable of Rest in their present Condition?——And our *Bodies are incapable*, as well as our Souls. They are not now those Sun-like Bodies which they shall be, when *this corruptible* hath *put on Incorruption, and this mortal put on Immortality.* They are our Prisons, and our Burthens; so full of Infirmities and Defects, that we are fain to spend most

(y) Rom. vii. 24.

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most of our Time in repairing them, and supplying their continual Wants. Is it possible that an immortal Soul should have Rest in such a distempered, noisome Habitation? Surely these sickly, weary, loathsome Bodies must be refined, before they can be capable of enjoying Rest.—The *Objects we here enjoy* are insufficient to afford us Rest. Alas! what is there in all the World to give us Rest? They that have most of it, have the greatest Burthen. They that set most by it, and rejoice most in it, do all cry out at last of its Vanity and Vexation. Men promise themselves a Heaven upon Earth; but when they come to enjoy it, it flies from them. He that has any Regard to the Works of the Lord, may easily see, that the very End of them is to take down our Idols, to make us weary of the World, and seek our Rest in him. Where does he cross us most, but where we promise Ourselves most Content? If you have a Child you dote upon, it becomes your Sorrow. If you have a Friend you trust in, and judge unchangeable, he becomes your Scourge. Is this a Place or State of Rest?—And as the Objects we here enjoy are insufficient for our Rest, so *God, who is sufficient, is here little enjoyed.* It is not here that he hath prepared the Presence-Chamber of his Glory. He hath drawn the Curtain between us and him: We are far from him as Creatures, and farther as frail Mortals, and fartheſt as Sinners. We hear now and then a Word of Comfort from him, and receive his Love-Tokens, to keep up our Hearts and Hopes; but this is not our full Enjoyment. And can any Soul, that hath made God his Portion, as every one hath that shall be saved by him, find Rest in so vast a Distance from him, and so seldom and small Enjoyment of him?—Nor are we now capable of Rest, as *there is a Worthiness must go before it.* Christ *will give the*

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Crown to none but the Worthy. And are we fit for the Crown, before we have overcome? Or for the Prize, before we have run the Race? Or to receive our Penny, before we have workt in the Vineyard; Or to be Rulers of Ten Cities, before we have improved our Ten Talents? Or to enter into the Joy of our Lord, before we have well done, as good and faithful Servants? God will not alter the Course of Justice, to give you *Rest* before you have *laboured* for the Crown of Glory, till you have *overcome* — There's Reason enough why our *Rest* should *remain* till the Life to come. Take Heed then *Christian Reader*, how thou dareſt to contrive and care for a Rest on Earth; or to murmur at God for thy Trouble, and Toil, and Wants in the Flesh. Doth thy Poverty *weary* thee? Thy Sickness? Thy bitter Enemies and unkind Friends? It should be so here. Do the Abominations of the Times, the Sins of Professors, the Hardening of the wicked, all *weary* thee? It must be so while thou art absent from thy *Rest*. Do thy Sins, and thy naughty, distempered Heart *weary* thee? Be thus *wearied* more and more. But under all this *Wearineſs*, art thou willing to go to God thy *Rest?* And to have thy Warfare accomplished? And thy Race and Labour ended? If not, complain more of thy own Heart, and get it more weary, till *Rest* seem more desirable.

§ 17. I have but one Thing more to add, for the Close of this Chapter, that *the Souls of Believers do enjoy inconceiveable Blessedness and Glory, even while they remain separated from their Bodies.*—What can be more plain than those Words of *Paul? We are always confident, knowing that whilst we are at Home* or rather sojourning *in the Body, we are absent from the Lord (For we walk by Faith, not by Sight). We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the Body, and to be present*

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sent with the Lord (z).—Or those? *I am in a Strait betwixt two, having a Desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better* (a).—If *Paul* had not expected to enjoy Christ till the Resurrection, why should he be in a Strait; or desire to depart? Nay, should he not have been loth to depart upon the very same Grounds? For while he was in the Flesh, he enjoyed something of Christ.—Plain enough is that of Christ to the Thief. *To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise* (b).——In the Parable of *Dives* and *Lazarus*, it seems unlikely Christ would so evidently intimate and suppose the Soul's Happiness or Misery presently after Death, if there were no such Matter (c).——Our Lord's Argument for the Resurrection supposes, that, *God being not the God of the Dead, but of the Living* (d), therefore *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, were then living in Soul.——If the *Blessedness* of *the Dead that die in the Lord* (e), were only in resting in the Grave, then a Beast or a Stone were as blessed; nay, it were evidently a Curse, and not a Blessing. For was not Life a great Mercy? Was it not a greater Mercy to serve God and do Good; to enjoy all the Comforts of Life, the Fellowship of Saints, the Comfort of Ordinances, and much of Christ in all; than to lie rotting in the Grave? Therefore some farther Blessedness is there promised.——How else is it said, *We are come to the Spirits of just Men made perfect* (f)? Sure, at the Resurrection, the Body will be made perfect as well as the Spirit.——Does not Scripture tell us, that *Enoch* and *Elias* are taken up already? And shall we think they possess that Glory alone?——Did not *Peter*, *James*, and *John*, see *Moses* also with Christ

(z) 2 Cor. v. 6--8. (a) Phil. i. 23. (b) Luke xxiii. 43.
(c) Luke xvi. 19--31. (d) Matt. xxii. 32. (e) Rev. xiv. 13.
(f) Heb. xii. 22, 23.

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on the Mount? Yet the Scripture saith, *Moses* died. And is it likely that Christ deluded their Senses, in shewing them *Moses*, if he should not partake of that Glory till the Resurrection?——And is not that of *Stephen* as plain as we can desire? *Lord Jesus, receive my Spirit* (g). Surely, if the Lord receive it, it is neither asleep, nor dead, nor annihilated; but it is where he is, and beholds his Glory.——That of the *wise Man* is of the same Import. *The Spirit shall return unto God who gave it* (h).——Why are we said to *have eternal Life*; and that to *know God is Life eternal*; and that a *Believer on the Son hath everlasting Life*? Or how is *the Kingdom of God within us*? If there be as great an Interruption of our Life, as till the Resurrection, this is no eternal Life, nor everlasting Kingdom.——*The Cities of Sodom and Gomorrah* are spoken of as *suffering the Vengeance of eternal Fire* (i). And if the Wicked already suffer eternal Fire, then no Doubt but the Godly enjoy eternal Blessedness.——When *John* saw his glorious Revelations, he is said to be *in the Spirit*, and to be *carried away in the Spirit*. And when *Paul* was *caught up to the third Heaven*, he knew not, *whether in the Body, or out of the Body* (k). This implies, that Spirits are capable of these glorious Things, without the Help of their Bodies.——Is not so much implied when *John* says, *I saw under the Altar the Souls of them that were slain for the Word of God* (l)?——When Christ says, *Fear not them which kill the Body, but are not able to kill the Soul* (m), does it not plainly imply, that when wicked Men have killed our Bodies, that is, have separated the Souls from them, yet the Souls are still alive?——The Soul of Christ was alive when his Body was dead, and therefore

(g) Acts vii. 59. (h) Eccles. xii. 7. (i) Jude v. 7.
(k) Rev. i. 10. iv. 2, 2 Cor. xii. 2. (l) Rev. vi. 9.
(m) Matt. x. 28.

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therefore so shall ours too. This appears by his Words to the Thief, *To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise*; and also by his Voice on the Cross, *Father, into thy Hands I commend my Spirit* (n).—If *the Spirits* of those *that were disobedient in the Days of Noah*, were *in Prison* (o), that is, in a living and suffering State; then certainly the separate Spirits of the Just are in an opposite Condition of Happiness.——Therefore, faithful Souls shall no sooner leave their Prisons of Flesh, but Angels will be their Convoy; Christ, with all the perfected Spirits of the Just, will be their Companions; Heaven will be their Residence, and God their Happiness. When such die, they may boldly and believingly say, as *Stephen*, *Lord Jesus, receive my Spirit*; and *commend* it, as Christ did, *into the Father's Hands*.

(n) Luke xxiii. 46. (o) 1 Pet. iii. 19, 20.

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CHAP. V.

The Misery of those who lose the Saint's Rest.

§ 1. *The Reader, if unregenerate, urged to consider what the Loss of Heaven will be.* § 2. (I) *The Loss of Heaven particularly includes,* § 3. (1) *The personal Perfection of the Saints;* § 4. (2) *God himself;* § 5. (3) *all delightful Affections towards God;* § 6. (4) *the blessed Society of Angels and glorified Spirits.* § 7. (II) *The Aggravations of the Loss of Heaven:* § 8. (1) *The Understanding of the Ungodly will then be cleared;* § 9. (2) *also enlarged:* § 10. (3) *Their Consciences will make a true and close Application:* § 11. (4) *Their Affections will be more lively:* § 12—18. (5) *Their Memories will be large and strong.* § 19. *Conclusion of the Chapter.*

§ 1. IF thou, *Reader*, art a Stranger to Christ, and to the holy Nature and Life of his People, who are before described, and shalt live and die in this Condition, let me tell thee, thou shalt never partake of the Joys of Heaven, nor have the least Taste of the Saint's eternal Rest. I may say, as *Ehud* to *Eglon*, *I have a Message to thee from God* (a); that as the Word of God is true, thou shalt never see the Face of God with Comfort. This Sentence I am commanded to pass upon thee; take it as thou wilt, and escape it if thou canst. I know thy humble and hearty Subjection to Christ would procure thy Escape; he

(a) Judges iii. 20.

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he would then acknowledge thee for one of his People, and give thee a Portion in the Inheritance of his Chosen. If this might be the happy Success of my Message, I should be so far from repining, like *Jonas*, that the Threatenings of God are not executed upon thee, that I should bless the Day that ever God made me so happy a Messenger. But if thou end thy Days in thy unregenerate State, as sure as the Heavens are over thy Head, and the Earth under thy Feet, thou shalt be shut out of the Rest of the Saints, and receive thy Portion in everlasting Fire. I expect thou wilt turn upon me, and say, When did God shew you the Book of Life, or tell you who they are that shall be saved, and who shut out? I answer, I do not name thee, nor any other; I only conclude it of the Unregenerate in general, and of thee, if thou be such a one. Nor do I go about to determine who shall repent, and who shall not; much less, that thou shalt never repent. I had rather shew thee what Hopes thou hast before thee, if thou wilt not sit still, and lose them. I would far rather persuade thee to hearken in Time, before the Door is shut against thee, than tell thee there is no Hope of thy repenting and returning. But if the foregoing Description of the People of God does not agree with the State of thy Soul, is it then a hard Question, whether thou shalt ever be saved? Need I ascend up into Heaven to know, that *without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord*; or, that only *the pure in Heart shall see God*; or, that *except a Man be born again, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God?* Need I go up to Heaven, to enquire that of Christ, which he came down to Earth to tell us; and sent his Spirit in his Apostles to tell us; and which he and they have left upon Record to all the World? And tho' I know not the Secrets of thy Heart, and therefore cannot tell thee by Name, whether it be

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thy State, or no; yet, if thou art but willing and diligent, thou mayst know thyself, whether thou art an Heir of Heaven or not. 'Tis the main Thing I desire, that if thou art yet miserable, thou mayst discern and escape it. But *how* canst thou *escape, if thou neglect* Christ and *Salvation?* 'Tis as impossible, as for the Devils themselves to be saved. Nay, God has more plainly and frequently spoken it in Scripture of such Sinners as thou art, than he has of the Devils. Methinks a Sight of thy Case should strike thee with Amazement and Horror. When *Belshazzar saw the Fingers of a Man's Hand that wrote upon the Wall, his Countenance was changed, and his Thoughts troubled him, so that the Joints of his Loins were loosed, and his Knees smote one against another* (b): What Trembling then should seize on thee, who hast the Hand of God himself against thee, not in a Sentence or two, but in the very Scope of the Scriptures, threatening the Loss of an everlasting Kingdom? Because I would fain have thee lay it to Heart, I will shew thee——*the Nature of thy Loss of Heaven,*— together with *its Aggravations.*

§ 2. (1.) In their *Loss of Heaven* the Ungodly lose —*the Saint's personal Perfection,*—*God himself,*—*all delightful Affections towards God,*—and *the blessed Society of Angels and Saints.*

§ 3. (1.) *The glorious personal Perfection which the Saints enjoy in Heaven,* is the great Loss of the Ungodly. They lose that shining Lustre of the Body, surpassing the Brightness of the Sun at Noon-Day. Though the Bodies of the Wicked will be raised more spiritual than they were upon Earth, yet that will only make them capable of the more exquisite Torments. They would be glad *then,* if every Member were a dead Member, that it might not feel the Punish-

(b) Dan v. 5, 6.

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Punishment inflicted on it; and if the whole Body were a rotten Carcase, or might lie down again in the Dust. Much more do they want that moral Perfection which the Blessed partake of; those holy Dispositions of Mind; that chearful Readiness to do the Will of God; that perfect Rectitude of all their Actions. Instead of these, they have that Perverseness of Will, that Loathing of Good, that Love to Evil, that Violence of Passion, which they had on Earth. 'Tis true, their Understandings will be much cleared by the ceasing of former Temptations, and experiencing the Falshood of former Delusions. But they have the same Dispositions still; and fain would they commit the same Sins, if they could; they want but Opportunity. There will be a greater Difference between these Wretches, and the glorified Christian, than there is betwixt a Toad, and the Sun in the Firmament. The *rich Man's Purple, and fine Linen, and sumptuous Fare,* did not so exalt him above *Lazarus, while at his Gate full of Sores.*

§ 4. (2) They shall have *no comfortable Relation to God, nor Communion with him. As they did not like to retain God in their Knowledge*; but said unto him, *Depart from us, for we desire not the Knowledge of thy Ways*; so God will abhor to retain them in his Household. He will never admit them to the Inheritance of his Saints, nor endure them to stand in his Presence, but *will profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me ye that work Iniquity.* They are ready *now* to lay as confident Claim to Christ and Heaven, as if they were sincere believing Saints. The Swearer, the Drunkard, the Whoremaster, the Worldling, can say, Is not God our Father, as well as yours? But when Christ separates his Followers from his Foes, and his faithful Friends from his deceived Flatterers, where then will be their presumptuous Claim?

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Then they shall find, that God is not their Father, because they would not be his People. As they would not consent that God by his Spirit should dwell in them, so the Tabernacle of Wickedness shall have no Fellowship with him, nor the Wicked inhabit the City of God. Only they that walked with God here, shall live and be happy with him in Heaven. Little does the World know what a Loss that Soul hath, who loses God! What a Dungeon would Earth be, if it had lost the Sun? What a loathsome Carrion the Body, if it had lost the Soul? Yet all these are nothing to the Loss of God. As the Enjoyment of God is the Heaven of the Saints, so the Loss of God is the Hell of the Ungodly. And as the enjoying of God is the enjoying of All, so the Loss of God is the Loss of All.

§ 5. (3) They also lose *all delightful Affections towards God.* That transporting Knowledge; those delightful Views of his glorious Face; the unconceivable Pleasure of loving him; the Apprehensions of his infinite Love to us; the constant Joys of his Saints; and the Rivers of Consolation with which he satisfies them. Is it nothing to lose all this? The Employment of a King in ruling a Kingdom, does not so far exceed *that* of the vilest Slave, as this heavenly Employment exceeds *that* of an earthly King. God suits Men's Employments to their Natures. Your Hearts, *Sinners*, were never set upon God in your Lives, never warmed with his Love, never longed after the Enjoyment of him; you had no Delight in speaking or hearing of him; you had rather have continued on Earth, if you had known how, than be interested in the glorious Praises of God. Is it meet then that you should be Members of the celestial Quire?

§ 6.

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§ 6. (4) THEY shall be deprived of *the blessed Society of Angels and glorified Saints.* Instead of being Companions of those happy Spirits, and numbered with those triumphant Kings, they must be Members of the Corporation of Hell, where they shall have Companions of a far different Nature and Quality. Scorning and abusing the Saints, hating them, and rejoicing in their Calamities, was not the Way to obtain their Blessedness. Now you are shut out of that Company, from which you first shut out yourselves; and are separated from them, with whom you would not be joined. You could not endure them in your Houses, nor Towns, nor scarce in the Kingdom. You took them, as *Ahab* did *Elijah*, for the *Troublers of the Land*; and, as the *Apostles* were taken, for *Men that turned the World upside down.* If any Thing fell out amiss, you thought all was owing to them. When they were dead or banished, you were glad they were gone, and thought the Country well rid of them. They molested you by faithfully reproving your Sins. Their holy Conversation troubled your Consciences, to see them so far excel you. It was a Vexation to you, to hear them pray or sing Praises in their Families. And is it any Wonder if you be separated from them hereafter? The Day is near when they will trouble you no more. *Betwixt them and you will be a great Gulf fixed.* Even in this Life, while the Saints were *mocked, destitute, afflicted, tormented*; and while they had their personal Imperfections; yet, in the Judgment of the Holy Ghost, they were such *of whom the World was not worthy* (a). Much more unworthy will the World be of their Fellowship in Glory.

§ 7. (11) I KNOW many will be ready to think, they could spare these Things in this World well

(a) Heb. xi. 36--38.

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enough, and why may they not be without them in the World to come? Therefore to shew them that *this Loss of Heaven will then be most tormenting*, let them now consider,——*their Understandings will be cleared to know their Loss*,——and *have more enlarged Apprehensions concerning it*,——*their Consciences will make a closer Application of it to themselves*,——*their Affections will no longer be stupified*,——nor *their Memories be treacherous*.

§ 8. (1) *The Understandings of the Ungodly will then be cleared, to know the Worth of that which they have lost.* Now they lament not their Loss of God, because they never knew His Excellence; nor the Loss of that holy Employment and Society, for they were never sensible what they were worth. A Man that has lost a Jewel, and took it but for a common Stone, is never troubled at his Loss; but when he comes to know what he lost, then he laments it. Though the Understandings of the Damned will not be sanctified, yet they will be cleared from a Multitude of Errors. They now think that their Honours, Estates, Pleasures, Health, and Life, are better worth their Labour, than the Things of another World; but when these Things have left them in Misery, when they experience the Things which before they did but read and hear of, they will be of another Mind. They would not believe that Water would drown, till they were in the Sea; nor the Fire burn, till they were cast into it; but when they feel, they will easily believe. All that Error of Mind which made them set light by God, and abhor his Worship, and vilify his People, will then be confuted and removed by Experience. Their Knowledge shall be increased, that their Sorrows may be increased. Poor Souls! they would comparatively be happy if their Understandings were wholly taken from them, if they had no more Know-

ledge

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ledge than Ideots, or brute Beasts; or if they knew no more in Hell, than they did upon Earth, their Loss would less trouble them. How happy would they *then* think themselves, if they did not know there is such a Place as Heaven! *Now*, when their Knowledge would help to prevent their Misery, they will not know, or will not read and study that they may know; therefore, when their Knowledge will but feed their consuming Fire, they shall know whether they will or no. They are now in a dead Sleep, and dream they are the happiest Men in the World; but when Death awakes them, how will their Judgments be changed in a Moment? and they that would not see, shall then see, and be ashamed.

§ 9. (2) As *their Understanding* will be cleared, so it *will be more enlarged, and made more capacious to conceive the Worth of that Glory which they have lost.* The Strength of their Apprehensions, as well as the Truth of them, will then be increased. What deep Apprehensions of the Wrath of God, the Madness of sinning, the Misery of Sinners, have those Souls that now endure this Misery, in Comparison with those on Earth that do but hear of it? What Sensibility of the Worth of Life has the condemned Man that is going to be executed, compared with what he was wont to have in the Time of his Prosperity? Much more will the actual Loss of eternal Blessedness make the Damned exceedingly apprehensive of the Greatness of their Loss; and as a large Vessel will hold more Water than a Shell, so will their more enlarged Understandings contain more Matter to feed their Torment, than their shallow Capacity can now do.

§ 10. (3) *Their Consciences also will make a truer and closer Application of this Doctrine to themselves, which will exceedingly tend to increase their Torment.* It will then be no hard Matter to them to say, "This is

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" my Loss! and this is my everlasting remediless " Misery!" The Want of this Self-Application is the main Cause, why they are so little troubled now. They are hardly brought to believe that there is such a State of Misery; but more hardly to believe that it is like to be their own. This makes so many Sermons lost to them, and all Threatenings and Warnings in vain. Let a Minister of Christ shew them their Misery ever so plainly and faithfully, they will not be perswaded they are so miserable. Let him tell them of the Glory they must lose, and the Sufferings they must feel, and they think he means not *them*, but some notorious Sinners. It is one of the hardest Things in the World, to bring a wicked Man to know that he is wicked, or to make him see himself in a State of Wrath and Condemnation. Though they may easily find by their Strangeness to the new Birth, and their Enmity to Holiness, that they never were Partakers of them; yet they as verily expect to *see God*, and *be saved*, as if they were the most sanctified Persons in the World. How seldom do Men cry out, after the plainest Discovery of their State, *I am the Man?* or acknowledge, that if they die in their present Condition, they are undone for ever? But when they suddenly find themselves in the Land of Darkness, feel themselves in scorching Flames, and see they are shut out of the Presence of God for ever; then the Application of God's Anger to themselves will be the easiest Matter in the World: They will then roar out these forced Confessions, " O my Mi- " sery! O my Folly! O my unconceivable, irre- " coverable Loss!"

§ 11. (4) *Then will their Affections likewise be more lively, and no longer stupified.* A hard Heart now makes Heaven and Hell seem but Trifles. We have shewed them everlasting Glory and Misery, and they

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are as Men asleep; our Words are as Stones cast against a Wall, which fly back in our Faces: We talk of terrible Things, but it is to dead Men; we search their Wounds, but they never feel us; we speak to Rocks, rather than to Men; the Earth will as soon tremble as they. But when these dead Souls are revived, what passionate Sensibility! what working Affections! what Pangs of Horror! what Depth of Sorrow will there then be! How violently will they fly in their own Faces! How will they rage against their former Madness! The Lamentations of the most affectionate Wife for the Loss of her Husband, or of the tendereſt Mother for the Loss of her Children, will be nothing to theirs for the Loss of Heaven. O the self-accusing and self tormenting Fury of those forlorn Creatures! How will they even tear their own Hearts, and be God's Executioners upon themselves! As themselves were the only meritorious Cause of their Sufferings, so themselves will be the chief Executioners. Even Satan, as he was not so great a Cause of their sinning as themselves, he will not be so great an Instrument of their Torment. How happy would they think themselves *then*, if they were turned into Rocks, or any Thing that had neither Passion nor Sense! How happy, if they could then *feel*, as lightly as they were wont to *hear!* if they could sleep out the Time of Execution, as they did the Time of the Sermons that warned them of it! But their Stupidity is gone; it will not be.

§ 12. (5) *Their Memories will moreover be as large, and strong as their Understanding and Affections.* Could they but lose the Use of their Memory, their Loss of Heaven being forgot, would little trouble them. Tho', they would account Annihilation a singular Mercy, they cannot lay aside any Part of their Being. Understanding, Conscience, Affections, Memory, must all, live

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live to torment them, which should have helped to their Happiness. As by these they should have fed upon the Love of God, and drawn forth perpetually the Joys of his Presence; so by these must they feed upon his Wrath, and draw forth continually the Pains of his Absence. *Now* they have no Leisure to consider, nor any Room in their Memories for the Things of another Life; but *then* they shall have nothing else to do; their Memories shall have no other Employment. God would have had the Doctrine of their eternal State *written on the Posts of their Doors, on their Hands and Hearts*; he would have had them mind it, and *mention it when they lay down and rose up, when they sat in their House, and when they walked by the Way*; and seeing they rejected this Counsel of the Lord, therefore it shall be written always before them in the Place of their Thraldom, that which Way soever they look, they may still behold it.——It will torment them *to think of the Greatness of the Glory they have lost*. If it had been what they could have spared, or a Loss to be repaired with any Thing else, it had been a small Matter. If it had been Health, or Wealth, or Friends, or Life, it had been nothing. But, oh! to lose *that exceeding eternal Weight of Glory!*——It will also torment them *to think of the Possibility they once had of obtaining it*. Then they will remember, "Time was, when I "was as fair for the Kingdom as others. I was set "upon the Stage of the World; if I had played my "Part wisely and faithfully, I might now have had "Possession of the Inheritance. I might have been "among yonder blessed Saints, who am now tor-"mented with these damned Fiends. The Lord did "*set before me Life and Death*; and having chose "Death, I deserve to suffer it. *The Prize* was held "out before me; if I had *run well*, I might have

"*obtained*

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" *obtained it*; if I had *striven*, I might have had *the* " *Victory*; if I had *fought* valiantly, I had been " *crowned.*"——It will yet more torment them *to remember, that their obtaining the Crown was*, not only possible, but *very probable*. It will wound them to think, " I had once the Gales of the Spirit ready to " have assisted me. I was purposing to be another " Man, to have cleaved to Christ, and forsook the " World. I was *almost* resolved to have been wholly " for God. I was once even turning from my base " seducing Lusts. I had cast off my old Compani- " ons, and was associating myself with the Godly. " Yet I turned back, lost my Hold, and broke my " Promises. I was *almost persuaded to be a* real " *Christian*, yet I conquered those Persuasions. What " Workings were in my Heart, when a faithful " Minister pressed home the Truth! O how fair " was I once for Heaven! I almost had it, and yet I " have lost it. Had I *followed on to seek the Lord*, I " had now been blessed among the Saints."

§ 13.——It will exceedingly torment them *to remember their lost Opportunities*. " How many Weeks, " and Months, and Years, did I lose, which if I " had improved I might now have been happy? " Wretch that I was! could I find no Time to study " the Work, for which I had all my Time? no " Time among all my Labours, to labour for Eter- " nity? Had I Time to eat, and drink, and sleep, " and none to save my Soul? Had I Time for Mirth " and vain Discourse, and none for Prayer? Could " I take Time to secure the World, and none to try " my Title to Heaven? O precious Time! I had " once enough, and now I must have no more. I " had once so much, I knew not what to do with " it; and now it is gone, and cannot be recalled. " O that I had but one of those Years to live over " again!

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" again! How speedily would I repent! How earneſtly would I pray! How diligently would I hear! " How cloſely would I examine my State! How " ſtrictly would I live? But 'tis now too late, alas! " too late."

§ 14.——It will add to their Calamity *to remember how often they were perſuaded to return.* " Fain " would *the Miniſter* have had me eſcape theſe Tor- " ments. With what Love and Compaſſion did he " beſeech me! And yet I did but make a Jeſt of it. " How oft did he convince me! And yet I ſtifled all " theſe Convictions. How did he open to me my " very Heart! And yet I was loth to know the worſt " of myſelf. O how glad would he have been, if he " could have ſeen me cordially turn to Chriſt? *My* " *godly Friends* admoniſhed me: They told me what " would come of my Wilfulneſs and Negligence at " laſt; but I neither believed, nor regarded them. " How long did *God himſelf* condeſcend to intreat " me! How did *the Spirit ſtrive* with my Heart, as " if he was loth to take a Denial! How did *Chriſt* " *ſtand knocking* one Sabbath after another, and cry- " ing to me, *Open, Sinner, open thy Heart to thy* " *Saviour, and I will come in, and ſup with thee, and* " *thou with me! Why doſt thou delay? How long* " *ſhall thy vain Thoughts lodge within thee? Wilt thou* " *not be pardoned, and ſanctified, and made happy?* " *When ſhall it once be?*" O how the Recollection of ſuch divine Pleadings will paſſionately tranſport the Damned with Self Indignation! " Muſt I tire out " the Patience of Chriſt? Muſt I make the God of " Heaven follow me in vain, till I had wearied him " with crying to me, *repent, return?* O how juſtly " is that Patience now turned into Fury, which falls " upon me with irreſiſtable Violence? When the " Lord cried to me, *Wilt thou not be made clean?*

" *When*

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" *When shall it once be?* my Heart, or at least my " Practice, answered, *Never.* And now when I " cry, How long shall it be till I am freed from this " Torment? How justly do I receive the same An- " swer, *Never, Never.*"

§ 15.——It will also be most cutting *to remember on what easy Terms they might have escaped their Misery.* Their Work was not to remove Mountains, nor conquer Kingdoms, nor fulfil the Law to the smallest Tittle, nor satisfy Justice for all their Transgressions. *The Yoke was easy, and the Burthen light,* which Christ would have laid upon them. It was but to repent, and cordially accept him for their Saviour; to renounce all other Happiness, and take the Lord for their supreme Good; to renounce the World and the Flesh, and submit to his meek and gracious Government; and to forsake the Ways of their own devising, and walk in his holy delightful Way. " Ah," thinks the poor tormented Wretch, " how justly do I suffer " all this, who would not be at so small Pains to " avoid it? Where was my Understanding, when I " neglected that gracious Offer; when I called *the* " *Lord an hard Master,* and thought His pleasant " Service a Bondage, and the Service of the Devil " and the Flesh the only Freedom? Was I not a " thousand Times worse than mad, when I cen- " sured the holy Way of God as needless Preciseness; " when I thought the Laws of Christ too strict, and " all too much that I did for the Life to come? " What would all Sufferings for Christ and Well- " doing have been, compared with these Sufferings " that I must undergo for ever? Would not the " Heaven which I have lost, have recompenced all " my Losses? And should not all my Sufferings have " been there forgotten? What if Christ had bid " me do some great Matter; whether to live in " con-

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" continual Fears and Sorrows, or to suffer Death " an hundred Times over; should I not have done " it? How much more, when he only said? *Believe,* " *and be saved. Seek my Face, and thy Soul shall live.* " *Take up thy Cross, and follow me, and I will give* " *thee everlasting Life.* O gracious Offer! O easy " Terms! O cursed Wretch, that would not be per- " suaded to accept them!"

§ 16.——THIS also will be a most tormenting Consideration, *to remember what they sold their eternal Welfare for.* When they compare the Value of the Pleasures of Sin, with the Value of *the Recompence of Reward*, how will the vast Disproportion astonish them? To think of the low Delights of the Flesh, or the applauding Breath of Mortals, or the possessing Heaps of Gold; and then to think of everlasting Glory. " This is all I had for my Soul, my God, " my Hopes of Blessedness!" It cannot possibly be expressed, how these Thoughts will tear his very Heart. Then will he exclaim against his Folly. " O miserable Wretch! Did I set my Soul to Sale " for so base a Price? Did I part with my God for a " little Dirt and Dross; and sell my Saviour, as " *Judas*, for a little Silver? I had but a Dream of " Delight, for my Hopes of Heaven; and *now* I am " awaked, it is all vanished. My Morsels are now " turned to Gall, and my Cups to Wormwood. " When they were past my Taste, the Pleasure " perished. And is this all that I have had for the " inestimable Treasure? What a mad Exchange " did I make? What if I had gained all the World, " and lost my Soul? But, alas! how small a Part " of the World was it, for which I gave up my Part " in Glory?" O that Sinners would think of this, when they are swimming in the Delights of the Flesh, and studying how to be rich and honourable in the World!

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World! When they are desperately venturing upon known Transgression, and sinning against the Checks of Conscience!

§ 17.——It will add yet more to their Torment, *when they consider that they most wilfully procured their own Destruction.* Had they been forced to sin, it would much abate the Rage of their Consciences; or if they were punished for another Man's Transgressions; or any other had been the chief Author of their Ruin. But to think, it was the Choice of their own Will, and that none in the World could have forced them to sin against their Wills; this will be a cutting Thought. "Had I not Enemies enough in "the World, (thinks this miserable Creature) but I "must be an Enemy to myself? God would never "give the Devil, nor the World, so much Power "over me, as to *force* me to commit the least Trans-"gression. They could but *entice*, it was *myself* that "yielded, and did the Evil. And must I lay Hands "upon my own Soul; and imbrue my Hands in my "own Blood? Never had I so great an Enemy as "myself. Never did God offer any Good to my "Soul, but I resisted him. He hath heaped Mercy "upon me, and renewed one Deliverance after an-"other, to draw my Heart to him; yea, he hath "gently chastised me, and made me groan under the "Fruit of my Disobedience; and tho' I promised "largely in my Affliction, yet never was I heartily "willing to serve him." Thus will it gnaw the Hearts of these Sinners, to remember that they were the Cause of their own Undoing; and that they wilfully and obstinately persisted in their Rebellion, and were mere Volunteers in the Service of the Devil.

§ 18.——The Wound in their Consciences will be yet deeper; *when they shall* not only *remember* it was their own doing, but *that they were at so much Cost and*

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and Pains for their own Damnation. What great Undertakings did they engage in to effect their Ruin; to resist the Spirit of God; to overcome the Power of Mercies, Judgments, and even the Word of God; to subdue the Power of Reason, and silence Conscience? All this they undertook, and performed. Tho they walked in continual Danger of the Wrath of God, and knew he could lay them in the Dust, and cast them into Hell, in a Moment; yet would they run upon all this. Oh the Labour it costs Sinners to be damned! Sobriety, with Health and Ease, they might have had at a cheaper Rate; yet they will rather have Gluttony and Drunkenness, with Poverty, Sheme, and Sickness. Contentment they might have, with Ease and Delight; yet they will rather have Covetousness and Ambition, tho' it costs them Cares and Fears, Labour of Body, and Distraction of Mind. Tho' their Anger be Self-Torment, and Revenge and Envy consume their Spirits; tho' Uncleanness destroy their Bodies, Estates, and good Names; yet will they do and suffer all this, rather than suffer their Souls to be saved. With what Rage will they lament their Folly, and say, "Was "Damnation worth all my Cost and Pains? Might "I not have been damned on free Cost, but I must "purchase it so dearly? I thought I could have been "saved without so much ado; and could I not have "been destroyed without so much ado? Must I "so laboriously work out my own Damnation, when "God commanded me to *work out my Salvation?* If "I had done as much for Heaven, as I did for Hell, "I had surely had it. I cried out of the tedious Way "of Godliness, and the painful Course of Self-"Denial; and yet I could be at a great deal more "Pains for Satan, and for Death. Had I loved "Christ as strongly as I did my Pleasures, and Profits,

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" and Honours, and thought on him as often, and " fought him as painfully, O how happy had I now " been! But juſtly do I ſuffer the Flames of Hell, " for buying them ſo dear, rather than have Heaven " when it was purchaſed to my Hands!"

§ 19. O THAT God would perſuade thee, *Reader*, to take up theſe Thoughts *now*, for preventing the unconceivable Calamity of taking them up in Hell as thy own Tormentor! Say not, that they are only imaginary. Read what *Dives* thought, *being in Torments* (d). As the Joys of Heaven are chiefly enjoyed by the rational Soul in its rational Actings, ſo muſt the Pains of Hell be ſuffered. As they will be Men ſtill, ſo will they feel and act as Men.

(d) Luke xvi.

CHAP.

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CHAP. VI.

The Misery of those, who, besides losing the Saint's Rest, lose the Enjoyments of Time, and suffer the Torments of Hell.

§ 1. *The Connection of this with the preceding Chapter,* § 2. (I) *The Enjoyments of Time which the Damned lose:* § 3. (1) *Their presumptuous Belief of their Interest in God and Christ:* § 4 (2) *All their Hopes:* § 5 (3) *All their Peace of Conscience:* § 6. (4) *All their carnal Mirth:* § 7. (5) *All their sensual Delights.* § 8. (II) *The Torments of the Damned are exceeding great:* § 9. (1) *The principal Author of them is God himself:* § 10. (2) *The Place or State of Torment:* § 11. (3) *These Torments are the Effects of divine Vengeance:* § 12 (4) *God will take Pleasure in executing them:* § 13. (5) *Satan and Sinners themselves will be God's Executioners:* § 14. (6) *These Torments will be universal;* § 15. (7) *without any Mitigation;* § 16. (8) *and eternal.* § 17. *The obstinate Sinner convinced of his Folly in venturing on these Torments;* § 18. *and intreated to fly for Safety to Christ.*

§ 1. AS *Godliness hath a Promise of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come*; and if we *seek first the Kingdom of God, and his Righteousness*, then *all* meaner *Things shall be added unto us:* So also are the Ungodly threatened with the Loss both of spiritual

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spiritual and temporal Blessings; and because they sought not first God's Kingdom and Righteousness, therefore shall they lose both it and that which they did seek, and there *shall be taken from them that* little *which they have.* If they could but have kept their present Enjoyments, they would not have much cared for the Loss of Heaven. If they had *lost and forsaken all for Christ*, they would have found all again in him; for he would have been *All in All* to them. But now they have forsook Christ for other Things, they shall lose Christ, and that also for which they forsook him; even——*the Enjoyments of Time*—besides *suffering the Torments of Hell.*

§ 2. (1) AMONG *the Enjoyments of Time*, they shall particularly lose——*their presumptuous Belief of their Interest in the Favour of God, and the Merits of Christ*; ——*all their Hopes*;——*all their false Peace of Conscience*;——*all their carnal Mirth*;——and *all their sensual Delights.*

§ 3. (1) *They shall lose their presumptuous Belief of their Interest in the Favour of God, and the Merits of Christ.* This false Belief *now* supports their Spirits, and defends them from the Terrors that would otherwise seize upon them. But what will ease their Trouble, when they can believe no longer, nor rejoice any longer? If a Man be near to the greatest Mischief, and yet strongly conceit that he is in Safety, he may be as chearful as if all were well. If there were no more to make a Man happy, but to believe that he is so, or shall be so, Happiness would be far more common than it is like to be. As true Faith is the leading Grace in the Regenerate, so is false Faith the leading Vice in the Unregenerate. Why do such Multitudes sit still, when they might have Pardon, but that they verily think they are pardoned already? If you could ask thousands in Hell, what Madness

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brought them thither? they would most of them answer, "We made sure of being saved, till we found "ourselves damned. We would have been more "earnest Seekers of Regeneration, and the Power of "Godliness, but we verily thought we were Christi-"ans before. We have flattered ourselves into these "Torments, and now there is no Remedy." *Reader*, I must in Faithfulness tell thee, that the confident Belief of their good State, which the careless, unholy, unhumbled Multitude so commonly boast of, will prove in the End but a Soul-damning Delusion. There is none of *this Believing* in Hell. It was Satan's Stratagem, that being *blindfold* they might follow him the more *boldly*; but *then* he will uncover their Eyes, and they shall see where they are.

§ 4. (2) *They shall lose also all their Hopes.* In this Life, though they were threatened with the Wrath of God, yet their Hope of escaping it bore up their Hearts. We can now scarce speak with the vilest Drunkard, or Swearer, or Scoffer, but he hopes to be saved for all this. O happy World, if Salvation were as common as this Hope! Nay, so strong are Mens Hopes, that they will dispute the Cause with Christ himself at Judgment, and plead their *having eat and drank in his Presence, and prophesied in his Name, and in his Name cast out Devils*; they will stifly deny that ever they neglected Christ in *Hunger*, *Nakedness*, or *Prison*, till he confutes them with the Sentence of their Condemnation. O the sad State of these Men, when they must bid farewell to all their Hopes! *When a wicked Man dieth, his Expectation shall perish*; *and the Hope of unjust Men perisheth* (a). *The Eyes of the Wicked shall fail, and they shall not escape, and their Hope shall be as the giving up of the Ghost* (b). The giving-up the Ghost, is a fit, but terrible Resemblance of a wicked

(a) Prov. xi. 7. (b) Job xi. 20.

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wicked Man's giving up his Hopes. As the Soul departeth not from the Body without the greatest Pain; so doth the Hope of the Wicked depart. The Soul departs from the Body suddenly, in a Moment, which hath there delightfully continued so many Years; just so doth the Hope of the Wicked depart. The Soul will never more return to live with the Body in this World; and the Hope of the Wicked takes an everlasting farewell of his Soul. A Miracle of Resurrection shall again unite Soul and Body, but there shall be no such miraculous Resurrection of the Damned's Hope. Methinks it is the most pitiable Sight this World affords, to see such an ungodly Person dying, and to think of his Soul and his Hopes departing together. With what a sad Change he appears in another World! Then if a Man could but ask that hopeless Soul, "Are you as confident of "Salvation as you were wont to be?" What a sad Answer would be returned! O that careless Sinners would be awakened to think of this in Time! *Reader*, rest not till thou canst give a Reason of all thy Hopes, grounded upon Scripture-Promises; that they purify thy Heart; that they quicken thy Endeavours in Godliness; that the more thou hopest the less thou sinnest, and the more exact is thy Obedience. If thy Hopes be such as these, go on in the Strength of the Lord, hold fast thy Hope, and *never shall it make thee ashamed*. But if thou hast not one sound Evidence of a Work of Grace on thy Soul, cast away thy Hopes. Despair of ever being saved, *except thou be born again*; or of *seeing God, without Holiness*; or of having Part in Christ, except thou *love him above Father, Mother, or thy own Life*. This Kind of Despair is one of the first Steps to Heaven. If a Man be quite out of his Way, what must be the first Means to bring him in again? He must despair of ever coming to his Journey's

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ney's End in the Way that he is in: If his Home be eastward, and he is going westward, as long as he hopes he is right, he will go on; and as long as he goes on hoping, he goes farther amiss: When he despairs of coming home, except he turn back, then he will return, and then he may hope. Just so it is, *Sinner*, with thy Soul: Thou art born out of the Way to Heaven, and hast proceeded many a Year; thou goest on, and hopest to be saved, because thou art not so bad as many others. Except thou throwest away those Hopes, and see that thou hast all this while been quite out of the Way to Heaven, thou wilt never return and be saved. There is nothing in the World more likely to keep thy Soul out of Heaven, than thy false Hopes of being saved, while thou art out of the Way to Salvation. See then how it will aggravate the Misery of the Damned, that, with the Loss of Heaven, they shall lose all *that* Hope of it, which now supports them.

§ 5. (3) *They will lose all that false Peace of Conscience which makes their present Life so easy.* Who would think, that sees how quietly the Multitude of the Ungodly live, that they must very shortly lie down in everlasting Flames? They are as free from the Fears of Hell as an obedient Believer; and for the most Part have less Disquiet of Mind than those who shall be saved. Happy Men, if this Peace would prove lasting! *When they shall say, Peace and Safety; then sudden Destruction cometh upon them, as Travail upon a Woman with Child, and they shall not escape* (c). O cruel Peace, which ends in such a War! The Soul of every Man by Nature is Satan's Garrison; all is at Peace in such a Man till Christ comes, and gives it terrible Alarms of Judgment and Hell, batters it with the Ordnance of his Threats and Terrors, forces

(c) 1 Thess. v. 3.

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forces it to yield to his mere Mercy, and take him for the Governor; then doth he cast out Satan, *overcome him, take from him all his Armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his Spoils* (d), and then doth he establish a firm and lasting Peace. If therefore thou art yet in that *first* Peace, never think it will endure. Can thy Soul have lasting Peace, in Enmity with Christ? Can he have Peace against whom God proclaims War? I wish thee no greater Good, than that God break in upon thy careless Heart, and shake thee out of thy false Peace, and make thee lie down at the Feet of Christ, and say, *Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do?* and so receive from him a better and surer Peace, which will never be quite broken, but be the Beginning of thy everlasting Peace, and not perish in thy perishing, as the groundless Peace of the World will do.

§ 6. (4) *They shall lose all their carnal Mirth.* They will themselves say of their *Laughter, it is mad; and of* their *Mirth, what doth it* (e)*?* It was but *as the crackling of Thorns under a Pot* (f). It made a Blaze for a while, but it was presently gone, and returned no more. The Talk of Death and Judgment was irksome to them, because it damped their Mirth. They could not endure to think of their Sin and Danger, because these Thoughts sunk their Spirits. They knew not what it was to weep for Sin, or to humble themselves under the mighty Hand of God. They could laugh away Sorrow, and sing away Cares, and drive away those melancholy Thoughts. To meditate, and pray, they fancied would be enough to make them miserable or run mad. Poor Souls! what a Misery will that Life be, where you shall have nothing but Sorrow; intense Heart-piercing, multiplied Sorrow; when you shall neither have the Joys of

(d) Luke xi. 22. (e) Eccles. ii. 2. (f) Eccles. vii. 6.

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Saints, nor your own former Joys? Do you think there is one merry Heart in Hell; or one joyful Countenance, or jesting Tongue? You now cry, *a little Mirth is worth a great deal of Sorrow.* But, surely, a little *godly Sorrow*, which would have ended in eternal Joy, had been worth much more than all your foolish Mirth; for the End of such Mirth is Sorrow.

§ 7. (5) *They shall also lose all their sensual Delights.* That which they esteemed their chief Good, their Heaven, their God, must they lose, as well as God himself. What a Fall will the proud ambitious Man have from the Top of his Honours? As his Dust and Bones will not be known from the Dust and Bones of the poorest Beggar; so neither will his Soul be honoured or favoured more than theirs. What a Number of the Great, Noble, and Learned, will be shut out of the Presence of Christ? They shall not find their magnificent Buildings, soft Beds, and easy Couches. They shall not view their curious Gardens, their pleasant Meadows, and plenteous Harvests. Their Tables will not be so furnished, nor attended. The *rich Man is* there no more *cloathed in Purple and fine Linen*, nor *fareth sumptuously every Day*. *There* is no expecting the Admiration of Beholders. They shall spend their Time in Sadness, and not in Sports and Pastimes. What an Alteration will they *then* find? The Heat of their Lust will be then abated. How will it even cut them to the Heart to look each other in the Face? What an Interview will there then be, cursing the Day that ever they saw one another? O that Sinners would now remember, and say! "Will these Delights accompany us into "the other World? Will not the Remembrance of "them be then our Torment? Shall we then take "this Partnership in Vice for true Friendship? Why

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" should we sell such lasting, incomprehensible Joys " for a Taste of seeming Pleasure? Come, as we " have sinned together, let us pray together, that " God would pardon us; and let us help one another " toward Heaven, instead of helping to deceive and " destroy each other." O that Men knew but what they desire, when they would so fain have all Things suited to the Desires of the Flesh! It is but to desire their Temptations to be increased, and their Snares strengthened.

§ 8. (II) As the Loss of the Saint's Rest will be aggravated by losing the Enjoyments of Time, *it will be much more so by suffering the Torments of Hell.* The exceeding greatness of such Torments may appear by considering,——*the principal Author of them, which is God himself*;——*the Place or State of Torment*;—— that *these Torments are the Fruit of divine Vengeance*; ——that *the Almighty takes Pleasure in them*;——that *Satan and Sinners themselves shall be God's Executioners*; ——that *these Torments shall be universal,—without Mitigation*,—and *without End.*

§ 9 (1) *The principal Author of Hell Torments is God himself.* As it was no less than God whom the Sinner had offended, so it is no less than God who will punish them for their Offences. He hath prepared those Torments for his Enemies. His continued Anger will still be devouring them. His Breath of Indignation will kindle the Flames. His Wrath will be an intolerable Burthen to their Souls. If it were but a Creature they had to do with, they might better bear it. Woe to him that falls under the Strokes of the Almighty! *It is a fearful Thing to fall into the Hands of the living God* (g). It were nothing in Comparison to this, if all the World were against them, or if the Strength of all Creatures were united in one

(g) Heb. x. 31.

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to inflict their Penalty. They had now rather venture to displease GOD than displease a Landlord, a Customer, a Master, a Friend, a Neighbour, or their own Flesh; but then they will wish a thousand Times in vain, that they had been hated of all the World, rather than have lost the Favour of God. What a consuming Fire is *his Wrath?* If it *be kindled* here *but a little*, how do we *wither like the Grass?* How soon doth our Strength decay, and turn to Weakness, and our Beauty to Deformity? The Flames do not so easily run through the dry Stubble, as the Wrath of God will consume these Wretches. They that could not bear a Prison, or a Gibbet, or Fire, for Christ, nor scarce a few Scoffs, how will they now bear the devouring Flames of divine Wrath?

§ 10. (2) *The Place or State of Torment is purposely ordained to glorify the Justice of God.* When God would glorify his Power, he made the Worlds. The comely Order of all his Creatures, declareth his Wisdom. His Providence is shewn, in sustaining all Things. When a Spark of his Wrath kindles upon the Earth, the whole World, except only eight Persons, are drowned; *Sodom*, *Gomorrah*, *Admah*, and *Zeboim*, are burnt with Fire from Heaven; the Sea shuts her Mouth upon some; the Earth opens and swallows up others; the Pestilence destroys by thousands. What a standing Witness of the Wrath of God, is the present deplorable State of the Jews? Yet the glorifying the Mercy and Justice of God, is intended most eminently for the Life to come. As God will then glorify his Mercy in a Way that is now beyond the Comprehension of the Saints that must enjoy it; so also will he manifest his Justice to be indeed the Justice of God. The everlasting Flames of Hell will not be thought too hot for the Rebellious; and when they have there burned through Millions of

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of Ages, he will not repent him of the Evil which is befallen them. Woe to the Soul that is thus set up as a Butt, for the Wrath of the Almighty to shoot at! and as a Bush that must burn in the Flames of his Jealousy, and never be consumed!

§ 11. (3) *The Torments of the Damned must be extreme, because they are the Effect of divine Vengeance.* Wrath is terrible, but Revenge is implacable. *When* the great God shall say, "My rebellious Creatures "shall now pay for all the Abuse of my Patience. "Remember how I waited your Leisure in vain, "how I stooped to persuade and intreat you. Did "you think I would always be so slighted?" *Then* will he be revenged for every abused Mercy, and for all their Neglects of Christ and Grace. O that Men would foresee this, and please God better in preventing their Woe!

§ 12. (4) *Consider also, that though God had rather Men would accept of Christ and Mercy, yet when they persist in Rebellion, he will take Pleasure in their Execution.* He tells us, *Fury is not in me*; yet he adds, *who would set the Briars and Thorns against me in Battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together.* Wretched Creatures! when *he that made them will not have Mercy on them, and he that formed them will shew them no Favour* (h). *As the Lord rejoiced over them to do them Good; so the Lord will rejoice over them to destroy them, and to bring them to nought* (i). Woe to the Soul whom God rejoiceth to punish! *He will laugh at their Calamity, he will mock when their Fear cometh; when their Fear cometh as Desolation, and their Destruction cometh as a Whirlwind; when Distress and Anguish cometh upon them* (k). Terrible Thing, when none in Heaven or Earth can help them but God, and he shall rejoice in their Ca-

(h) Isaiah xxvii. 4, 11. (i) Deut. xxviii. 63. (k) Prov. i. 26, 27.

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lamity! Tho' Scripture speaks of *God's laughing and mocking*, not literally, but after the Manner of Men; yet it is such an Act of God in tormenting the Sinner, which cannot otherwise be more fitly expressed.

§ 13. (5) *Consider that Satan and themselves shall be God's Executioners.* He that was here so successful in drawing them from Christ, will then be the Instrument of their Punishment, for yielding to his Temptations. That is the Reward he will give them for all their Service; for their rejecting the Commands of God, and forsaking Christ, and neglecting their Souls at his Persuasion. If they had served Christ as faithfully as they did Satan, he would have given them a better Reward.—It is also most just, that they should be their own Tormentors, that they may see their whole Destruction is of themselves; and then who can they complain of but themselves?

§ 14. (6) *Consider also that their Torment will be universal.* As all Parts have joined in Sin, so must they all partake in the Torment. The *Soul*, as it was the chief in sinning, shall be the chief in suffering; and as it is of a more excellent Nature than the Body, so will its Torments far exceed bodily Torments; and as its Joys far surpass all sensual Pleasures, so the Pains of the Soul exceed corporal Pains. ——It is not only a Soul, but a *sinful Soul*, that must suffer. Fire will not burn, except the Fuel be combustible; but if the Wood be dry, how fiercely will it burn? The Guilt of their Sins will be to damned Souls like Tinder to Gun-Powder, to make the Flames of Hell take hold upon them with Fury.—— The *Body* must also bear its Part. That Body which was so carefully looked to, so tenderly cherished, so curiously dressed; what must it now endure? How are its haughty Locks now taken down? How little will those Flames regard its Comeliness and Beauty?

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Those Eyes which were wont to be delighted with curious Sights, must then see nothing but what shall terrify them; an angry God above them, with those Saints whom they scorned, enjoying the Glory which they have lost; and about them will be only Devils and damned Souls. How will they look back, and say, "Are all our Feasts, and Games, and Revels, "come to this?" Those Ears which were accustomed to Musick and Songs, shall hear the Shrieks and Cries of their damned Companions; Children crying out against their Parents, that gave them Encouragement and Example in Evil; Husbands and Wives, Masters and Servants, Ministers and People, Magistrates and Subjects, charging their Misery upon one another, for discouraging in Duty, conniving at Sin, and being silent, when they should have plainly foretold the Danger. Thus will Soul and Body be Companions in Woe.

§ 15. (7) *Far greater will these Torments be, because without Mitigation.* In this Life, when told of Hell, or Conscience troubled their Peace, they had Comforters at Hand; their carnal Friends, their Business, their Company, their Mirth. They could drink, play, or sleep away their Sorrows. But now all these Remedies are vanished. Their hard, presumptuous, unbelieving Heart was a Wall to defend them against Trouble of Mind. Satan was himself their Comforter, as he was to our first Mother; "*Hath God said, ye shall not eat?—ye shall not surely* "*die.* Doth God tell you that you shall lie in Hell? "It is no such Matter. God is more merciful. Or "if there be a Hell, what need you fear it? Are "not you Christians? Was not the Blood of Christ "shed for you?" Thus as the Spirit of Christ is the Comforter of the Saints, so Satan is the Comforter of the Wicked. Never was a Thief more careful lest

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ning; or that unseen Power which rends in Pieces the mighty Oaks, and tears down the strongest Buildings; or at the Plague, when it rageth around thee? If thou hadst seen the Plagues of *Egypt*; or the Earth swallow up *Dathan* and *Abiram*; or *Elijah* bring Fire from Heaven to destroy the Captains and their Companies; would not any of these Sights have daunted thy Spirits? How then canst thou bear the Plagues of Hell?——*Why art thou dismayed with such small Sufferings as befall thee here?* A Tooth-ach; a Fit of the Gout, or Stone; the Loss of a Limb; or falling into Beggary and Disgrace? And yet all these laid together, will be one Day accounted a happy State, in Comparison of that which is suffered in Hell.——*Why does the Approach of Death so much affright thee?* O how cold it strikes to thy Heart! And would not the Grave be accounted a Paradise, compared with that Place of Torment which thou slightest?——*Is it an intolerable Thing to burn Part of thy Body, by holding it in the Fire?* What then will it be to suffer ten thousand Times more for ever in Hell?——*Why does the Thought or Mention of Hell occasion any Disquiet in thy Spirit?* And canst thou endure the Torments themselves?——*Why doth the rich Man complain to* Abraham *of his Torment in Hell!* Or thy dying Companions lose their Courage, and change their haughty Language? Why cannot these make as light of Hell as thyself?——*Didst thou never see, or speak with a Man under Despair?* How uncomfortable was his Talk? How burthensome his Life? Nothing he possessed did him Good: He had no Sweetness in Meat or Drink: The Sight of Friends troubled him: He was weary of Life, and fearful of Death. If the Misery of the Damned can be endured, why cannot a Man more easily endure these Foretastes of Hell?——*What if thou shouldst see the Devil appear to thee in some terrible*

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rible Shape? Would not thy Heart fail thee, and thy Hair stand an End? And how wilt thou endure to live for ever, where thou shalt have no other Company but Devils, and the Damned, and shalt not only see them, but be tormented with them and by them?——Let me once more ask, *If the Wrath of God be so light, why did the Son of God himself make so great a Matter of it?* It made Him *sweat as it were great Drops of Blood falling down to the Ground.* The Lord of Life cried, *My Soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto Death.* And on the Cross, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* Surely if any one could have born these Sufferings easily, it would have been Jesus Christ. He had another Measure of Strength to bear it than thou hast. Woe to thee, *Sinner*, for thy mad Security! Dost thou think to find it tolerable to thee, which was so heavy to Christ? Nay, the Son of God is cast into a bitter Agony, and bloody Sweat, only under *the Curse of the Law*; and yet thou, *feeble, foolish Creature*, makest nothing to bear also *the Curse of the Gospel*, which requires a *much sorer Punishment* (1). The good Lord bring thee to thy right Mind by Repentance, lest thou buy thy Wit at too dear a Rate!

§ 18. And now, *Reader*, I demand thy Resolution; what Use wilt thou make of all this? Shall it all be lost to thee? or wilt thou consider it in good Earnest? Thou hast cast away many a Warning of God; wilt thou do so by this also? Take Heed, God will not always stand warning and threatening. The Hand of Revenge is lifted up, the Blow is coming, and Woe to him on whom it lighteth! Dost thou throw away the *Book*, and say, *it speaks of nothing but Hell and Damnation?* Thus thou usest also to complain of the *Preacher*. But wouldst thou not have

(1) Heb. x. 29.

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have us tell thee of these Things? Should we be guilty of the Blood of thy Soul, by keeping silent that which God hath charged us to make known? Wouldst thou perish in Ease and Silence, and have us to perish with thee, rather than displease thee, by speaking the Truth? If thou wilt be guilty of such inhuman Cruelty, God forbid we should be guilty of such sottish Folly. This Kind of *Preaching* or *Writing* is the ready Way to be hated; and the Desire of Applause is so natural, that few delight in such a displeasing Way. But consider, Are these Things true, or are they not? If they were not true, I would heartily join with thee against any that fright People without a Cause. But if these Threatenings be the Word of God, what a Wretch art thou, that wilt not hear it, and consider it? If thou art one of the People of God, this Doctrine will be a Comfort to thee, and not a Terror. If thou art yet unregenerate, methinks thou shouldst be as fearful to hear of Heaven, as of Hell, except the bare Name of Heaven or Salvation be sufficient. Preaching Heaven and Mercy to thee, is intreating thee to seek them, and not reject them; and preaching Hell, is but to persuade thee to avoid it. If thou wert quite past Hope of escaping it, then it were in vain to tell thee of Hell; but as long as thou art alive, there is Hope of thy Recovery, and therefore all Means must be used to awake thee from thy Lethargy. Alas! what Heart can now possibly conceive, or what Tongue express, the Pains of those Souls that are under the Wrath of God? Then, *Sinners*, you will be crying to Jesus Christ, "O Mercy! "O Pity, Pity on a poor Soul!" Why, I do now, in the Name of the Lord Jesus, cry to thee, "O have "Mercy, have Pity, *Man*, upon thy own Soul!" Shall God pity thee, who wilt not be intreated to pity thyself? If thy Horse see but a Fit before him,

thou

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thou canst scarcely force him in; and wilt thou so obstinately cast thyself into Hell, when the Danger is foretold thee? *Who can stand before the Indignation of the Lord? and who can abide in the Fierceness of his Anger* (m)? Methinks thou shouldst need no more Words, but presently cast away thy Soul-damning Sins, and wholly deliver up thyself to Christ. Resolve on it immediately, and let it be done, that I may see thy Face in Rest among the Saints. May the Lord persuade thy Heart to strike this Covenant without any longer Delay! But if thou be hardened unto Death, and there be no Remedy, yet say not another Day but that thou wast faithfully warned, and hadst a Friend that would fain have prevented thy Damnation.

(m) Nahum i. 6.

CHAP.

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CHAP. VII.

The Necessity of diligently seeking the Saint's Rest.

§ 1. *The Saint's Rest surprisingly neglected; particularly,* § 2. *by the Worldly-minded,* § 3. *the prophane Multitude,* § 4. *formal Professors,* § 5—8. *and by the Godly themselves, whether Magistrates, Ministers, or People.* § 9. *The Author mourns the Neglect, and excites the Reader to Diligence by considering,* § 10. *the Ends we aim at, the Work we have to do, the Shortness and Uncertainty of our Time, and Diligence of our Enemies;* § 11. *our Talents, Mercies, Relations to God, and our Afflictions;* § 12. *what Assistances we have, what Principles we profess, and our Certainty never to do enough;* § 13. *that every Grace tends to Diligence, that to trifle is lost Labour, that much Time is misspent, and that our Recompence and Labour will be proportionable;* § 14. *that striving is the divine Appointment, all Men do or will approve it, the best Christians at Death lament their Want of it, Heaven is often lost for Want of it, but never obtained without it;* § 15. *God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit are in earnest, God is so in hearing and answering Prayer, Ministers in their Instructions and Exhortations, all the Creatures in serving us, Sinners in serving the Devil, as we were once, and now are, in worldly Things, and in Heaven and Hell all are in earnest.*

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earnest. § 16. *The Chapter concludes with proposing some awakening Questions to the Ungodly, and* § 17. *also to the Godly.*

§ 1. IF there be so certain and glorious a Rest for the Saints, why is there no more *industrious seeking after it?* One would think, if a Man did but once hear of such unspeakable Glory to be obtained, and believed what he heard to be true, he should be transported with the Vehemency of his Desire after it, and should almost forget to eat or drink, and should care for nothing else, and speak of and enquire after nothing else, but how to get this Treasure. And yet People who hear of it daily, and profess to believe it as a fundamental Article of their Faith, do as little mind it, or labour for it, as if they had never heard of any such Thing, or did not believe one Word they hear. This Reproof is more particularly applicable to ——the *Worldly-minded*,—*the prophane Multitude*,—*the formal Professors*,—and even to *the Godly themselves*.

§ 2. *The Worldly-minded* are so taken up in seeking the Things below, that they have neither Heart nor Time to seek *this Rest. O foolish Sinners, who hath bewitched you?* The World bewitches Men into brute Beasts, and draws them some Degrees beyond Madness. See what riding and running, what scrambling and catching for a Thing of nought, while eternal Rest lies neglected! What contriving and caring to get a Step higher in the World than their Brethren, while they neglect the Kingly Dignity of the Saints! What insatiable Pursuit of fleshly Pleasures, while they look on the Praises of God, the Joy of Angels, as a tiresome Burthen! What unwearied Diligence in raising their Posterity, enlarging their Possessions; perhaps for a poor Living from Hand to Mouth; while

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while Judgment is drawing near; but, how it ſhall go with them then, never puts them to one Hour's Conſideration! What riſing early, and ſitting up late, and labouring from Year to Year, to maintain themſelves and Children in Credit till they die; but, what ſhall follow after, they never think on! Yet theſe Men cry, "*may we not be ſaved without ſo much* "*ado?*" How early do they rouze up their Servants to their Labour! But how ſeldom do they call them to Prayer, or reading the Scriptures! What hath this *World* done for its Lovers and Friends, that it is ſo eagerly followed, and painfully ſought after, while Chriſt and Heaven ſtand by, and few regard them? or what will the World do for them for the Time to come? The common Entrance into it is through Anguiſh and Sorrow. The Paſſage through it, is with continual Care and Labour. The Paſſage out of it, is the ſharpeſt of all. O *unreaſonable, bewitched Men!* Will Mirth and Pleaſure ſtick cloſe to you? Will Gold and worldly Glory prove faſt Friends to you in the Time of your greateſt Need? Will they hear your Cries in the Day of your Calamity? At the Hour of your Death, will they either anſwer or relieve you? Will they go along with you to the other World, and bribe the Judge, and bring you off clear, or purchaſe you a Place among the Bleſſed? Why then did the rich Man want *a Drop of Water to cool his Tongue?* Or are the ſweet Morſels of preſent Delight and Honour of more Worth than eternal Reſt? and will they recompence the Loſs of that *enduring Treaſure?* Can there be the leaſt Hope of any of theſe? Ah vile, deceitful World! How oft have we heard thy moſt faithful Servants at laſt complaining; "Oh the "World hath deceived me, and undone me! It flat- "tered me in my Proſperity, but now it turns me off "in my Neceſſity. If I had as faithfully ſerved "Chriſt,

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"Christ, as I have served it, he would not have left "me thus comfortless and hopeless." Thus they complain; and yet succeeding Sinners will take no Warning.

§ 3. As for *the profane Multitude*, they will not be persuaded to be at so much Pains for Salvation, as to perform the common outward Duties of Religion. If they have the Gospel preached in the Town where they dwell, it may be they will give the Hearing to it one Part of the Day, and stay at home the other; or if the Master come to the Congregation, yet Part of his Family must stay at home. If they want the plain and powerful preaching of the Gospel, how few are there in a whole Town, who will travel a Mile or two to hear abroad; though they will go many Miles to the Market for Provision for their Bodies? They know the Scripture is the Law of God, by which they must be acquitted or condemned in Judgment; and that *the Man is blessed who delights in the Law of the Lord, and in his Law doth meditate Day and Night*; yet will they not be at Pains to read a Chapter once a Day. If they carry a Bible to Church, and neglect it all the Week, this is the most Use they make of it. Though they are commanded to *pray without ceasing*, and to *pray always*; yet they will neither pray constantly with their *Families*, nor in *Secret*. Though *Daniel* would rather be *cast to the Lions*, than forbear *praying three Times a Day in his House*, where his Enemies might hear him; yet these Men will rather venture to be an eternal Prey to *Satan*, *the roaring Lion*, than thus seek their own Safety. Or their cold and heartless Prayers invite God to a Denial: For among Men it is taken for granted, that he who asks but *slightly* and *seldom*, cares not much for what he asks. They judge themselves unworthy of Heaven, who think it is not worth their more constant and earnest

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earneſt Requeſts. If every Door was marked, where Families do not Morning and Evening earneſtly ſeek the Lord in Prayer, that *his Wrath* might be *poured out upon* ſuch prayerleſs *Families*, our Towns would be as Places overthrown by the Plague, the People being dead within, and the Mark of Judgment without. I fear where one Houſe would eſcape, ten would be marked out for Death, and then they might teach their Doors to pray, *Lord have Mercy upon us*, becauſe the People would not pray themſelves. But eſpecially if we could ſee what Men do in their ſecret Chambers, how few would you find in a whole Town that ſpend one Quarter of an Hour, Morning and Night, in earneſt Supplication to God for their Souls? O how little do theſe Men ſet by eternal Reſt! Thus do they ſlothfully neglect all Endeavours for their own Welfare, except ſome publick Duty in the Congregation, which *Cuſtom* or *Credit* engages them to. Perſuade them to read *good Books*, learn the Grounds of Religion in their *Catechiſm*, and ſanctify the *Lord's Day* in Prayer, and Meditation, and hearing the Word, and forbearing all worldly Thoughts and Speeches; and what a tedious Life do they take this to be? As if they thought Heaven were not worth doing ſo much for.

§ 4. ANOTHER Sort are *formal Profeſſors*, who will be brought to any outward Duty, but to the inward Work of Religion they will never be perſuaded. They will preach, or hear, or read, or talk of Heaven, or pray in their Families, and take Part with the Perſons or Cauſes that are good, and deſire to be eſteemed among the Godly; but you can never bring them to the more ſpiritual Duties; as to be conſtant and fervent in ſecret Prayer and Meditation; conſcientious in Self-Examination; Heavenly-minded; to watch over their Hearts, Words, and Ways; to mortify

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mortify the Flesh, and not make Provision to fulfil its Lusts; to love and heartily forgive an Enemy, and prefer their Brethren before themselves; to lay all they have, or do, at the Feet of Christ, and prize his Service and Favour before all; to prepare to die, and willingly leave all to go to Christ. Hypocrites will never be persuaded to any of these.——If an *Hypocrite* entertains the Gospel *with Joy*; it is only in the Surface of his Soul, he never gives *the Seed* any *Depth of Earth:* It changes his *Opinion*, but never melts and new moulds his Heart, nor sets up Christ there in full Power and Authority. As his Religion lies most in Opinion, so does his chief Business and Conversation. He is usually an ignorant, bold, conceited Dealer in Controversies; rather than an humble Embracer of known Truth, with Love and Obedience. By his slighting the Judgments and Persons of others, and seldom talking with Seriousness and Humility of the great Things of Christ, he shews his Religion dwells in the Brain, and not in his Heart. The *Wind of Temptation carries him away* as a Feather, because his *Heart* is not *established with* Christ and *Grace*. He never in private Conversation humbly bewails his Soul's Imperfections, or tenderly acknowledges his Unkindnesses to Christ; but gathers his greatest Comforts from his being of such a Judgment or Party.—The like may be said of the *worldly Hypocrite*, who choaks the Gospel with the Thorns of worldly Cares and Desires. He is convinced, that he must be religious, or he cannot be saved; and therefore he reads, and hears, and prays, and forsakes his former Company and Courses; but he resolves to keep his Hold of present Things. His Judgment may say, God is the chief Good; but his Heart and Affections never said so. The World hath more of his Affections than God, and therefore is his God. Though

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he does not run after Opinions and Novelties, like the former, yet he will be of that Opinion which will best serve his *worldly Advantage*. And as one whose Spirits are enfeebled by some pestilential Disease; so this Man's Spirits being possessed by the Plague of a worldly Disposition, how feeble is he in secret Prayer! How superficial in Examination and Meditation! How poor in Heart-Watchings! How nothing at all in loving and walking with God, rejoicing in him, or desiring him!——So that both these, and many other Sorts of Hypocrites, though they will go with you in the easy Outside of Religion, yet will never be at the Pains of inward and spiritual Duties.

§ 5. And even *the Godly themselves* are too lazy Seekers of their everlasting Rest. Alas! what a Disproportion is there between our Light and Heat? our Profession and Prosecution? Who makes that Haste, as if it were for Heaven? How still we stand? How idly we work? How we talk, and jest, and trifle away our Time? How deceitfully we perform the Work of God? How we hear, as if we heard not; and pray, as if we prayed not; and examine, and meditate, and reprove Sin, as if we did it not; and enjoy Christ, as if we enjoyed him not; as if we had learned to use the Things of Heaven, as the *Apostle* teacheth us to *use the Things of the World?* What a frozen Stupidity hath benumbed us! We are dying, and we know it, and yet we stir not; we are at the Door of eternal Happiness, or Misery, and yet we perceive it not; Death knocks, and we hear it not; God and Christ call and cry to us, "*To-day, if ye "will hear my Voice, harden not your Hearts; work, "while it is Day, for the Night cometh when none can "work.* Now ply your Business, labour for your "Lives, lay out all your Strength and Time; now "or never;" and yet we stir no more than if we were half

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half asleep. What Haste do Death and Judgment make? How fast do they come on? They are almost at us, and yet what little Haste we make? Lord, what a senseless, earthly, hellish Thing is a hard Heart! Where is the Man that is in earnest a *Christian?* Methinks Men every where make but a Trifle of their eternal State. They look after it but a little by the bye; they do not make it the Business of their Lives. If I were not sick myself of the same Disease, with what Tears should I mix this Ink? With what Groans should I express these Complaints? And with what Heart-Grief should I mourn over this universal Deadness?

§ 6. ——Do *Magistrates* among us seriously perform their Work? Are they zealous for God? Do they build up his House? Are they tender of his Honour? Do they second the *Word?* And fly in the Face of Sin and Sinners, as the Disturbers of our Peace, and the only Cause of all our Miseries? Do they improve all their Power, Wealth, and Honour, and all their Influence, for the greatest Advantage to the Kingdom of Christ, as Men that must shortly give an Account of their Stewardship?

§ 7. ——How thin are those *Ministers* that are serious in their Work! Nay, how mightily do the very best fail in this! Do we cry out of Men's Disobedience to the Gospel *in the Demonstration of the Spirit*, and deal with Sin as the destroying Fire in our Towns, and by Force pull Men out of it? Do we persuade our People, as those should, that *know the Terrors of the Lord?* Do we press Christ, and Regeneration, and Faith, and Holiness, believing that, without these, Men can never have Life? Do our Bowels yearn over the ignorant, careless, and obstinate Multitude? When we look them in the Face, do our Hearts melt over them, lest we should never

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ſee their Faces in Reſt? Do we, as *Paul, tell them weeping*, of their fleſhly and earthly Diſpoſition? *And teach them publickly, and from Houſe to Houſe, at all Seaſons, and with many Tears?* And do we intreat them, as for their Soul's Salvation? Or rather, do we not ſtudy to gain the Approbation of critical Hearers; as if a Miniſter's Buſineſs were of no more Weight but to tell a ſmooth Tale for an Hour, and look no more after the People till the next Sermon? Does not carnal Prudence controul our Fervour, and make our Diſcourſes lifeleſs, on Subjects the moſt piercing? How gently we handle thoſe Sins, which will ſo cruelly handle our People's Souls? In a Word, our Want of Seriouſneſs about the Things of Heaven, charms the Souls of Men into Formality, and brings them to this cuſtomary, careleſs Hearing, which undoes them. May the Lord pardon the great Sin of the Miniſtry in this Thing; and, in particular, my own!

§ 8. And are *the People* more ſerious than Magiſtrates or Miniſters? How can it be expected? *Reader*, look but to thyſelf, and reſolve the Queſtion. Aſk Conſcience, and ſuffer it to tell thee truly. Haſt thou ſet thy eternal Reſt before thine Eyes, as the great Buſineſs thou haſt to do in this World? Haſt thou watched and laboured, with all thy Might, *that no Man take thy Crown?* Haſt thou made Haſte, leſt thou ſhouldſt come too late, and die before thy Work be done? Haſt thou *preſſed* on through Crowds of Oppoſition *towards the Mark, for the Prize of the high Calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus*, ſtill *reaching forth unto thoſe Things which are before?* Can *Conſcience* witneſs your ſecret Cries, and Groans, and Tears? Can your *Family* witneſs, that you taught them the Fear of the Lord, and warned them not to *go to that Place of Torment?* Can your *Miniſter* witneſs, that he has heard

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heard you cry out, *What shall I do to be saved?* and that you have followed him with Complaints against your Corruptions, and with earnest Enquiries after the Lord? Can your *Neighbours* about you witness, that you reprove the Ungodly, and take Pains to save the Souls of your Brethren? Let all these Witnesses judge this Day between God and you, whether you are in earnest about eternal Rest. You can tell by his Work, whether your Servant has loitered, though you did not see him; so you may by looking at your own Work. Is your *Love* to Christ, your *Faith*, your *Zeal*, and other *Graces*, strong or weak? What are your *Joys?* What is your *Assurance?* Is all in Order within you? Are you *ready to die*, if this should be the Day? Do the *Souls*, among whom you have conversed, *bless you?* Judge by this, and it will quickly appear whether you have been Labourers or Loiterers.

§ 9. O BLESSED Rest, how unworthily art thou neglected! O glorious Kingdom, how art thou undervalued! Little know the careless Sons of Men, what a State they set so light by. If they once knew it, they would surely be of another Mind. I hope thou, *Reader*, art sensible, what a desperate Thing it is to trifle about eternal Rest; and how deeply thou hast been guilty of this thyself. And I hope also, thou wilt not now suffer this Conviction to die. Should the Physician tell thee, *If you will observe but one Thing, I doubt not to cure your Disease*; wouldst thou not observe it? So I tell thee, if thou wilt observe but this one Thing for thy Soul, I make no doubt of thy Salvation; shake off thy Sloth, and put to all thy Strength, and be a *Christian indeed*; I know not then what can hinder thy Happiness. As far as thou art gone from God, seek him with all thy Heart, and no Doubt thou shalt find him. As unkind as thou hast

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been to Jeſus Chriſt, ſeek him heartily, obey him unreſervedly, and thy Salvation is as ſure as if thou hadſt it already. But full as Chriſt's Satisfaction is, free as the Promiſe is, large as the Mercy of God is; if thou only talk of theſe, when thou ſhouldſt eagerly entertain them, thou wilt be never the better for them; and if thou loiter, when thou ſhouldſt labour, thou wilt loſe the Crown. Fall to Work then ſpeedily and ſeriouſly, and bleſs God that thou haſt yet Time to do it. And to ſhew that I urge thee not without Cauſe, I will here add *a Variety of animating Conſiderations*. Rouſe up thy Spirit, and, as *Moſes* ſaid to *Iſrael*, *ſet thy Heart unto all the Words which I teſtify unto thee this Day*; *for it is not a vain Thing, becauſe it is your Life* (a). May the Lord open thy Heart, and faſten his Counſel effectually upon thee!

§ 10. *Conſider how reaſonable it is, that our Diligence ſhould be anſwerable to the Ends we aim at, to the Work we have to do, to the Shortneſs and Uncertainty of our Time, and to the contrary Diligence of our Enemies.* ——*The Ends of a Chriſtians Deſires and Endeavours are* ſo *great*, that no human Underſtanding on Earth can comprehend them. What is ſo excellent, ſo important, or ſo neceſſary, as, the *glorifying of God, the Salvation of our own and other Men's Souls, by eſcaping the Torments of Hell, and poſſeſſing the Glory of Heaven?* And can a Man be too much affected with Things of ſuch Moment? Can he deſire them too earneſtly, or love them too ſtrongly, or labour for them too diligently? Don't we know, that if our Prayers prevail not, and our Labour ſucceeds not, we are undone for ever?——*The Work of a Chriſtian here is very great and various.* The *Soul* muſt be *renewed*; *Corruptions* muſt be *mortified*; *Cuſtom, Temptations*, and *worldly Intereſts*, muſt be *conquered*; *Fleſh* muſt

(a) Deut. xxxii. 46, 47.

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must be *subdued*; *Life*, *Friends*, and *Credit* must be *slighted*; *Conscience* on good Grounds be *quieted*; and *Assurance* of Pardon and Salvation *attained*. Though God must give us these without our Merit, yet he will not give them without our earnest Seeking and Labour. Besides, there is much *Knowledge* to be *got*, many *Ordinances* to be *used*, and *Duties* to be *performed*: Every Age, Year, and Day; every Place we come to; every Person we deal with; every Change of our Condition; still require the renewing of our Labour: Wives, Children, Servants, Neighbours, Friends, Enemies, all of them call for Duty from us. Judge then, whether Men that have so much Business lying upon their Hands, should not exert themselves; and whether it be their Wisdom either to delay or loiter.——*Time passeth on.* Yet a few Days, and we shall be here no more. Many Diseases are ready to assault us. We that are now preaching, and hearing, and talking, and walking, must very shortly be carried, and laid in the Dust, and there left to the Worms in Darkness and Corruption; we are almost there already; we know not whether we shall have another Sermon, or Sabbath, or Hour. How active should they be, who know they have so short a Space for so great a Work!——*And we have Enemies that are always plotting and labouring for our Destruction.* How diligent is *Satan* in all Kind of Temptations! Therefore *be sober, be vigilant*; *because your Adversary the Devil, as a roaring Lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour. Whom resist stedfast in the Faith* (b). How diligent are all the *Ministers of Satan! False Teachers*, *Scoffers*, *Persecutors*, and our inbred *Corruptions*, the most busy and diligent of all! Will a feeble Resistance serve our Turn? Should not

(b) 1 Pet. v. 8, 9.

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we be more active for our own Preservation, than our Enemies are for our Ruin?

§ 11. It should excite us to Diligence, when we *consider our Talents, and our Mercies, our Relations to God, and the Afflictions he lays upon us.*——*The Talents which we have received are many and great.* What People breathing on Earth have had plainer *Instructions*, or more forcible *Persuasions*, or more constant *Admonitions*, in Season and out of Season? *Sermons*, till we have been weary of them; and *Sabbaths*, till we profaned them? Excellent *Books* in such Plenty, that we knew not which to read? What People have had God so near them? or have seen so much of Christ crucified before their Eyes? or have had Heaven and Hell so opened unto them? What Speed should such a People make for Heaven? How should they fly that are thus winged? And how swiftly should they sail that have Wind and Tide to help them? A small Measure of Grace beseems not such a People, nor will an ordinary Diligence in the Work of God excuse them.——*All our Lives have been filled with Mercies.* God hath mercifully poured out upon us the Riches of Sea and Land, of Heaven and Earth. We are fed, and cloathed with Mercy. We have Mercies within and without. To number them, is to count the Stars, or the Sands of the Sea-Shore. If there be any Difference betwixt Hell and Earth; yea, or Heaven and Earth; then certainly we have received Mercy. If the Blood of the Son of God be Mercy, then we are engaged to God by Mercy. Shall God think nothing too much, nor too good, for us; and shall we think all too much that we do for him? When I compare my slow and unprofitable Life, with the frequent and wonderful Mercies received, it shames me, it silences me, and leaves me inexcusable.—— Besides our Talents and Mercies, *our Relations to God* are

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are most endearing. Are we his *Children*, and do we not owe him our most tender Affections, and dutiful Obedience? Are we *the Spouse of Christ*, and should we not obey and love him? *If he be a Father, where is his Honour? and if he be a Master, where is his Fear* (c)? *We call him Master, and Lord, and we say well* (d). But if our Industry be not answerable to our Relations, we condemn ourselves in saying, we are his Children, or his Servants. How will the hard Labour, and daily Toil, which Servants undergo to please their Masters, judge and condemn those who will not labour so hard for their Great Master? Surely there is no Master like him; nor can any Servants expect such Fruit of their Labours as his Servants.—And if we wander out of God's Way, or loiter in it, how is *every Creature ready to be his Rod, to reduce us, or put us on!* Our sweetest Mercies will become our Sorrows. Rather than want a Rod, the Lord will make us a Scourge to ourselves: Our diseased Bodies shall make us groan; our perplexed Minds shall make us restless; our Conscience shall be as a Scorpion in our Bosom. And is it not easier to endure the Labour than the Spur? Had we rather be still afflicted, than be up and doing? And though they that do most, meet also with Afflictions; yet surely, according to their Peace of Conscience, and Faithfulness to Christ, the Bitterness of their Cup is abated.

§ 12. To quicken our Diligence in our Work, we should also *consider, what Assistances we have, what Principles we profess, and our Certainty that we can never do too much.—For our Assistance in the Service of God, all the World are our Servants.* The Sun, Moon, and Stars, attend us with their Light and Influence. The Earth, with all its Furniture of Plants and Flowers,

(c) Mal. i. 6. (d) John xiii. 13.

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Fruits, Birds, and Beaſts; the Sea, with its Inhabitants; the Air, the Wind, the Froſt and Snow, the Heat and Fire, the Clouds and Rain, all wait upon us while we do our Work. Yea, *the Angels are all* our *miniſtring Spirits* (e). Nay more, the Patience of God doth wait upon us; the Lord Jeſus Chriſt waiteth, in the Offers of his Blood; the Holy Spirit waiteth, by ſtriving with our backward Hearts; beſides the Miniſters of the Goſpel, who ſtudy and wait, preach and wait, pray and wait, upon careleſs Sinners. And is it not an intolerable Crime for us to triſle, while Angels and Men, yea, the Lord himſelf, ſtand by, and look on, and, as it were, hold us the Candle while we do nothing? I beſeech you, *Chriſtians*, whenever you are praying, or reproving Tranſgreſſors, or upon any Duty, remember what Aſſiſtances you have for your Work, and then judge how you ought to perform it.——*The Principles we profeſs*, are, that God is the chief Good; that all our Happineſs conſiſts in his Love, and therefore it ſhould be valued and ſought above all Things; that he is our only Lord, and therefore chiefly to be ſerved; that we muſt love him with all our Heart, and Soul, and Strength; that our great Buſineſs in the World is to glorify God, and obtain Salvation. Are theſe Doctrines ſeen in our Practice? Or rather do not our Works deny what our Words confeſs?——But however our Aſſiſtances and Principles excite us to our Work, *we are ſure we can never do too much.* Could we *do all, we are unprofitable Servants* (f); much more when we are ſure to fail in all. No Man can obey, or ſerve God too much. Though all Superſtition, or Service of our own deviſing, may be called a *being righteous over-much*; yet as long as we keep to the Rule of the Word, we can never be righ-

(e) Heb. i. 14. (f) Luke xvii. 10.

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righteous too much. The World is mad with Malice, when they think, that faithful Diligence in the Service of Christ is foolish Singularity. The Time is near when they will easily confess, that God could not be loved, or served too much, and that no Man can be too busy to save his Soul. We may easily do too much for the World, but we cannot for God.

§ 13. LET us further *consider, that it is the Nature of every Grace to promote Diligence, that trifling in the Way to Heaven is lost Labour, that much precious Time is already misspent, and that in Proportion to our Labour will be our Recompence.*——*See the Nature and Tendency of every Grace.* If you *loved God*, you would think nothing too much that you could possibly do to serve him, and please him still more. Love is quick and impatient, active and observant. If you *loved Christ*, you would *keep his Commandments*, nor accuse them of too much Strictness. If you had *Faith*, it would quicken and encourage you. If you had the *Hope of Glory*, it would, as the Spring in the Watch, set all the Wheels of your Souls a going. If you had the *Fear of God*, it would rouze you out of your Slothfulness. If you had *Zeal*, it would inflame, and *eat you up*. In what Degree soever thou art sanctified, in the same Degree thou wilt be serious and laborious in the Work of God.——*But they that trifle, lose their Labour.* Many, who like *Agrippa*, are but *almost Christians*, will find in the End they shall be but *almost saved*. If two be running in a Race, he that runs slowest loses both Prize and Labour. A Man that is lifting at a Weight, if he put not sufficient Strength to it, had as good put none at all. How many Duties have Christians lost, for Want of doing them thoroughly? *Many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able* (g),

(g) Luke xiii. 24.

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who, if they had *ſtriven*, might have been able. Therefore, put to a little more Diligence and Strength, that all you have done already be not in vain.——*Beſides, is not much precious Time already loſt?* With ſome of us Childhood and Youth are gone; with ſome, their middle Age alſo; and the Time before us is very uncertain. What Time have we ſlept, talked, and played away, or ſpent in worldly Thoughts and Cares? How little of our Work is done? The Time we have loſt cannot be recalled; ſhould we not then redeem and improve the little which remains? If a Traveller ſleep, or trifle moſt of the Day, he muſt travel ſo much faſter in the Evening, or fall ſhort of his Journey's End.——*Doubt not but the Recompence will be according to your Labour.* The Seed which is buried and dead, will bring forth a plentiful Harveſt. Whatever you do, or ſuffer, *everlaſting Reſt* will pay for all. There is no repenting of Labours or Sufferings in Heaven. There not one ſays, "Would I had ſpared my Pains, and prayed leſs, or "been leſs ſtrict, and done as the reſt of my Neigh-"bours did." On the contrary, it will be their Joy to look back upon their Labours and Tribulations, and to conſider how the mighty Power of God brought them through all. We may all ſay, as *Paul, I reckon, that the Sufferings*, and Labours, *of this preſent Time, are not worthy to be compared with the Glory which ſhall be revealed in us* (h). We labour but for a Moment, but we ſhall reſt for ever. Who would not put forth all his Strength for one Hour, when for that Hour's Work he may be a Prince while he lives? *God is not unrighteous, to forget our Work and Labour of Love* (i). Will not *all our Tears be wiped away*, and all the Sorrow of our Duties be then forgotten?

§ 14.

(h) Rom. viii. 18. (i) Heb. vi. 10.

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§ 14. NOR does it less *deserve to be considered, that striving is the divinely appointed Way of Salvation, that all Men either do or will approve it, that the best Christians at Death lament their Negligence, and that Heaven itself is often lost for want of striving, but is never had on easier Terms.——The sovereign Wisdom of God has made striving necessary to Salvation.* Who knows the Way to Heaven better than the God of Heaven? When Men tell us we are too strict, whom do they accuse, God, or us? If it were a Fault, it would lie in him that commands, and not in us who obey. These are the Men that ask us, whether we are wiser than all the World besides? and yet they will pretend to be wiser than God. How can they reconcile their Language with the Laws of God? *The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth Violence, and the Violent take it by Force* (k). *Strive to enter in at the strait Gate; for many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able* (l). *Whatsoever thy Hand findeth to do, do it with thy Might; for there is no Work, nor Device, nor Knowledge, nor Wisdom in the Grave whither thou goest* (m). *Work out your own Salvation with Fear and Trembling* (n). *Give Diligence to make your Calling and Election sure* (o). *If the Righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the Ungodly and the Sinner appear* (p)? Let them bring all the seeming Reasons they can, against the holy Violence of the Saints; this sufficeth me to confute them all, that God is of another Mind, and He hath commanded me to do much more than I do; and tho' I could see no other Reason for it, his Will is Reason enough. Who should make Laws for us, but He that made us? And who should point out the Way to Heaven, but He that must bring us thither? And who should fix the Terms of Salvation, but He that bestows the Gift

(k) Matt. xi. 12. (l) Luke xiii. 24. (m) Eccles. ix. 10.
(n) Phil. ii. 12. (o) 2 Pet. i. 10. (p) 1 Pet. iv. 18.

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of Salvation? So that let the World, the Flesh, or the Devil, speak against a holy laborious Life, this is my Answer, God hath commanded it.——*Nay, there never was, or will be, a Man, but will approve such a Life, and will one Day justify the Diligence of the Saints.* And who would not go that Way, which every Man shall finally applaud? True, it is now a *Way every where spoken against.* But let me tell you, most that speak against it, in their Judgments approve of it; and those that are now against it, will shortly be of another Mind. If they come to Heaven, their Mind must be changed before they come there. If they go to Hell, their Judgment will then be altered, whether they will or no. Remember this, you that love the Opinion and Way of the Multitude; why then will you not be of the Opinion that all will be of? Why will you be of a Judgment, which you are sure all of you shortly to change? Oh that you were but as wise in this, as those in Hell!——*Even the best of Christians, when they come to die, exceedingly lament their Negligence.* They then wish, "Oh that I had been "a thousand Times more holy, more heavenly, "more laborious for my Soul! The World accuses "me for doing too much, but my own Conscience "accuses me for doing too little. It is far easier "bearing the Scoffs of the World, than the Lashes "of Conscience. I had rather be reproached by the "Devil for seeking Salvation, than reproved of God "for neglecting it." How do their Failings thus wound and disquiet them, who have been the Wonders of the World for their heavenly Conversation! ——*It is for Want of more Diligence, that Heaven itself is often lost.* When they that have *heard the Word, and anon with Joy received it, and have done many Things, and heard* the Ministers of Christ *gladly* (q), shall

(q) Matt. xiii. 20. Mark vi. 20.

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shall yet perish; should not this rouze us out of our Security? How far hath many a Man followed Christ, and yet forsook him, when all worldly Interests and Hopes were to be renounced?——*God hath resolved, that Heaven shall not be had on easier Terms.* Rest must always follow Labour. *Without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord* (r). Seriousness is the very Thing wherein consists our Sincerity. If thou art not serious, thou art not a Christian. It is not only a high Degree in Christianity, but the very Life and Essence of it. As Fencers upon a Stage differ from Soldiers fighting for their Lives; so Hypocrites differ from serious Christians. If Men could be saved without this serious Diligence, they would never regard it; all the Excellencies of God's Ways would never entice them. But when God hath resolved, that, without serious Diligence here, you shall not rest hereafter, is it not Wisdom to exert ourselves to the utmost?

§ 15. BUT to persuade thee, if possible, *Reader*, to be serious in thy Endeavours for Heaven, let me add more Considerations. As for Instance, consider,—*God is in earnest with you; and why should not you be so with him?* In his *Commands*, his *Threatnings*, his *Promises*, He means as He speaks. In his *Judgments* He is serious. Was He not so, when He *drowned the World?* When He *consumed Sodom and Gomorrah?* And when He *scattered the Jews?* Is it Time then to trifle with God?——*Jesus Christ was serious in purchasing our Redemption.* In teaching, He neglected his Meat and Drink. In Prayer, *He continued all Night.* In doing Good, *his Friends* thought *him beside himself.* In Suffering, *He fasted forty Days, was tempted, betrayed, spit upon, buffeted, crowned with Thorns, sweat Drops of Blood, was crucified, pierced, died:*

(r) Heb. xii. 14.

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died: There was no Jeſting in all this. And ſhould not we be ſerious in ſeeking our own Salvation?——*The Holy Spirit is ſerious in ſolliciting us to be happy.* His Motions are frequent, preſſing, and importunate. *He ſtriveth with* us. He is *grieved*, when we reſiſt him. And ſhould not we be ſerious then in obeying, and yielding to, his Motions?——*God is ſerious in hearing our Prayers, and beſtowing his Mercies.* He is *afflicted with us.* He *regardeth every Groan and Sigh*, and *puts every Tear into his Bottle.* The next Time thou art in Trouble, thou wilt beg for a ſerious Regard of thy Prayers. And ſhall we expect real Mercies, when we are ſlight and ſuperficial in the Work of God?——*The Miniſters of Chriſt are ſerious in exhorting and inſtructing you.* They beg of God, and of you; and long more for the Salvation of your Souls, than for any worldly Good. If they kill themſelves with their Labour, or ſuffer Martyrdom for preaching the Goſpel; they think their Lives are well beſtowed, ſo that they prevail for the ſaving your Souls. And ſhall other Men be ſo painful and careful for your Salvation, and you be ſo careleſs and negligent of your own?——*How diligent and ſerious are all the Creatures in ſerving you?* What Haſte makes the *Sun* to compaſs the World? The *Fountains* are always flowing for thy Uſe; the *Rivers* ſtill running; *Spring* and *Harveſt* keep their Times. How hard does thy *Ox* labour for thee from Day to Day? How ſpeedily does thy *Horſe* travel with thee? And ſhalt thou only be negligent? Shall all theſe be ſo ſerious in ſerving thee, and thou ſo careleſs in thy Service to God?——*The Servants of the World and the Devil are ſerious and diligent.* They work, as if they could never do enough. They make Haſte, as if afraid of coming to Hell too late. They bear down Miniſters, Sermons,

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Sermons, and all before them. And shall they be more diligent for Damnation, than thou for Salvation? Hast thou not a better Master, sweeter Employment, greater Encouragements, and a better Reward?——*Time was when thou wast serious thyself in serving Satan and the Flesh, if it be not so yet.* How eagerly didst thou follow thy Sports, thy evil Company, and sinful Delights? And wilt thou not now be as earnest and violent for God?——*You are to this Day in earnest about the Things of this Life.* If you are sick, or in Pain, what serious Complaints do you utter? If you are poor, how hard do you labour for a Livelihood? And is not the Business of your Salvation of far greater Moment?——*There is no jesting in Heaven or Hell.* The Saints have a real Happiness, and the Damned a real Misery. There are no remiss or sleepy Praises in Heaven, nor such Lamentations in Hell. All there are in earnest. When thou, *Reader*, shalt come to Death and Judgment, O what deep, Heart-piercing Thoughts wilt thou have of Eternity! Methinks I foresee thee already astonished, to think how thou couldst possibly make so light of these Things. Methinks I even hear thee crying out of thy Stupidity and Madness.

§ 16. AND now, *Reader*, having laid down these undeniable Arguments, I do, in the Name of God, demand thy Resolution; Wilt thou yield Obedience, or not? I am confident thy Conscience is convinced of thy Duty. Darest thou now go on in thy common careless Course, against the plain Evidence of Reason, and Commands of God, and against the Light of thy own Conscience? Darest thou live as loosely, sin as boldly, and pray as seldom, as before? Darest thou profane the Sabbath, slight the Service of God, and think of thine everlasting State as carelessly as

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as before? Or doſt thou not rather reſolve to *gird up the Loins of thy Mind*, and ſet thyſelf wholly to the Work of thy Salvation, and break through the Oppoſitions, and ſlight the Scoffs and Perſecutions of the World, and *lay aſide every Weight, and the Sin which doth ſo eaſily beſet thee, and run with Patience the Race that is ſet before thee?* I hope theſe are thy full Reſolutions. Yet, becauſe I know the Obſtinacy of the Heart of Man, and becauſe I am ſolicitous thy Soul might live, I once more intreat thy Attention to the following Queſtions; and I command thee from God, that thou ſtifle not thy Conſcience, nor reſiſt Conviction; but anſwer them faithfully, and obey accordingly.——If, by being diligent in Godlineſs, you could grow rich, get Honour or Preferment in the World, be recovered from Sickneſs, or live for ever in Proſperity on Earth; what Lives would you lead, and what Pains would you take in the Service of God? And is not the Saint's Reſt a more excellent Happineſs than all this?—— If it were Felony to break the Sabbath, neglect ſecret or Family-Worſhip, or be looſe in your Lives; what Manner of Perſons would you then be? And is not eternal Death more terrible than temporal? ——If God uſually puniſhed with ſome preſent Judgment every Act of Sin, as he did the Lye of *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, what Kind of Lives would you lead? And is not eternal Wrath far more terrible?——If one of your Acquaintance ſhould come from the Dead, and tell you, that he ſuffered the Torments of Hell for thoſe Sins you are guilty of; what Manner of Perſons would you afterwards be? How much more ſhould the Warnings of God affright you?——If you knew that this were the laſt Day you had to live in the World, how would

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would you spend it? And you know not but it may be your last, and are sure your last is near. ——If you had seen the general Dissolution of the World, and all the Pomp and Glory of it consumed to Ashes; what would such a Sight perswade thee to do? Such a Sight you shall certainly see.———If you had seen the Judgment set, and the Books opened, and the Wicked stand trembling on the left Hand of the Judge, and the Godly rejoicing on the right Hand, and their different Sentence pronounced; what Persons would you have been after such a Sight? This Sight you shall one Day surely see.———If you had seen Hell open, and all the Damned there in their easeless Torments; also Heaven opened, as *Stephen* did, and all the Saints there triumphing in Glory; what a Life would you lead after such Sights? These you will see before it be long.———If you had lain in Hell but one Year, or one Day, or Hour, and there felt the Torments you now hear of; how seriously would you then speak of Hell, and pray against it? And will you not take God's Word for the Truth of this, except you feel it?—— Or if you had possessed the Glory of Heaven but one Year; what Pains would you take, rather than be deprived of such incomparable Glory?— Thus I have said enough, if not to stir up the Sinner to a serious working-out his Salvation, yet at least to silence him, and leave him inexcusable at the Judgment of God. Only as we do by our Friends when they are dead, and our Words and Actions can do them no Good, yet to testify our Affections for them we weep and mourn; so will I also do for these unhappy Souls. It makes my Heart tremble, to think, how they will stand be-

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fore the Lord confounded and ſpeechleſs! When He ſhall ſay, "Was the World, or Satan, a better Friend to you than I? Or had they done for you more than I had done? Try now whether they will ſave you, or recompence you for the Loſs of Heaven, or be as good to you as I would have been." What will the wretched Sinner anſwer to any of this? But though Man will not hear, we may hope in ſpeaking to God. "O thou that didſt weep and groan in Spirit over a dead *Lazarus*, pity theſe dead and ſenſeleſs Souls, till they are able to weep and groan in Pity to themſelves! As thou haſt bid thy Servant ſpeak, ſo ſpeak now thyſelf; they will hear thy Voice ſpeaking to their Hearts, who will not hear mine ſpeaking to their Ears. Lord, thou haſt long knocked at theſe Hearts in vain; now break the Doors, and enter in."

§ 17. YET to ſhew *the Godly* why they, above all Men, ſhould be laborious for Heaven, I deſire to aſk them:——What Manner of Perſons ſhould thoſe be, whom God hath choſen to be Veſſels of Mercy? Who have felt the Smart of their Negligence in their new Birth, in their Troubles of Conſcience, in their Doubts and Fears, and in other ſharp Afflictions? Who have often confeſſed their Sin of Negligence to God in Prayer? Who have bound themſelves to God by ſo many Covenants? What Manner of Perſons ſhould they be, who are near to God as the Children of his Family? who have taſted ſuch Sweetneſs in diligent Obedience? who are many of them ſo uncertain what ſhall everlaſtingly become of their Souls? What Manner of Perſons ſhould they be in Holineſs, whoſe Sanctification is ſo imperfect?

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perfect? Whose Lives and Duties are so important to the saving or destroying a Multitude of Souls? and on whom the Glory of the Great God so much depends?———Since these Things are so, I charge thee, *Christian*, in thy Master's Name, to consider, and resolve the Question, *What Manner of Persons ought we to be in all Holy Conversation and Godliness?* And let thy Life answer the Question as well as thy Tongue.

CHAP.

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CHAP. VIII.

How to discern our Title to the Saint's Rest.

§ 1. *The Folly of Men in not enquiring after a Title to the Saint's Rest*; § 2. *and their Cause for Terror, as long as they are destitute of a Title.* § 3. *Self-Examination is urged upon them*; § 4. (1) *from the Possibility of arriving at Certainty*; § 5—9. (2) *from the Hindrances which will be thrown in our Way by Satan, Sinners, our own Hearts, and many other Causes*; § 10. (3) *from considering how easy, common, and dangerous it is to be mistaken; that trying will not be so painful as the Neglect; that God will soon try us, and that to try ourselves will be profitable*; § 11. *and therefore the Reader is intreated no longer to delay the Trial.* § 12. *Then* (4) *Directions are given how to try*; § 13. *and* (5) *Marks for Trial are added; particularly,* § 14 *Do we make God our chief Good?* § 15. *Do we heartily accept of Christ for our Lord and Saviour?* § 16, 17. *The Chapter concludes with illustrating the great Importance of these two Marks.*

§ 1. IS there such a glorious Rest so near at Hand? And shall none enjoy it but the People of God? What mean most of the World then, to live so contentedly without *Assurance* of their Interest in this Rest, and neglect the trying of their *Title* to it? When the Lord hath so fully opened the Blessedness of that Kingdom, which none but obedient Believers shall

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ſhall poſſeſs; and ſo fully expreſs'd thoſe Torments, which the reſt of the World muſt eternally ſuffer; methinks they that believe this to be certainly true, ſhould never be at any Quiet in themſelves, till they were fully aſſured of their being Heirs to the Kingdom. Lord, what a ſtrange Madneſs is this, that Men, who know they muſt preſently enter upon unchangeable Joy or Pain, ſhould yet live as uncertain what ſhall be their Doom, as if they had never heard of any ſuch State; yea, and live as quietly and merrily in this Uncertainty, as if all were made ſure, and there were no Danger! Are theſe Men alive, or dead? Are they awake, or aſleep? What do they think on? Where are their Hearts? If they have but a weighty Suit at Law, how careful are they to know whether it will go for or againſt them? If they were to be tried for their Lives at an earthly Bar, how careful would they be to know whether they ſhould be ſaved or condemned, eſpecially if their Care might ſurely ſave them? If they be dangerouſly ſick, they will enquire of the Phyſician, what think you, Sir, ſhall I eſcape, or no? But in the Buſineſs of their Salvation, they are content to be uncertain. If you aſk moſt Men *a Reaſon of the Hope that is in them*, they will ſay, "Becauſe God is merciful, and Chriſt "died for Sinners," and the like general Reaſons, which any Man in the World may give as well as they: But put them to prove their Intereſt in Chriſt, and in the ſaving Mercy of God, and they can ſay nothing to the Purpoſe. If God or Man ſhould ſay to them, What Caſe is thy Soul in, Man? Is it regenerate, ſanctified, and pardoned, or no? He would be ready to ſay, as *Cain* of *Abel*, "*I know not, am I* "*my* Soul's *Keeper?* I hope well; I truſt God with "my Soul; I ſhall ſpeed as well as other Men do; "I thank God, I never made any Doubt of my Sal-"vation."

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" vation." Thou haſt Cauſe to doubt, becauſe thou never didſt doubt; and yet more, becauſe thou haſt been ſo careleſs in thy Confidence. What do thy Expreſſions diſcover, but a wilful Neglect of thy own Salvation? As a Ship-Maſter that ſhould let his Veſſel alone, and ſay, " I will venture it among the " Rocks, and Waves, and Winds; I will truſt God " with it; it will ſpeed as well as other Veſſels." What horrible Abuſe of God is this, to pretend to truſt God, to cloak their own wilful Negligence! If thou didſt really truſt God, thou wouldſt alſo be ruled by him, and truſt him in his own appointed Way. He requires thee to *give Diligence to make thy Calling and Election ſure* (a), and ſo to truſt him. He hath marked thee out a Way in Scripture, by which thou art charged to *ſearch and try thyſelf*, and mayſt arrive at Certainty. Were he not a fooliſh Traveller, that would hold on his Way, when he does not know whether he be right or wrong; and ſay, " I " hope I am right; I will go on, and truſt God?" Art not thou guilty of this Folly in thy Travels to Eternity? Not conſidering that a little ſerious Enquiry, whether thy Way be right, might ſave thee a great deal of Labour, which thou beſtoweſt in vain, and muſt undo again, or elſe thou wilt miſs of Salvation, and undo thyſelf.

§ 2. How canſt thou think or ſpeak of the *Great God* without Terror, as long as thou art uncertain whether He be thy Father, or thy Enemy, and knoweſt not but all his Perfections may be employed againſt thee? Or of *Jeſus Chriſt*, when thou knoweſt not whether his Blood hath purged thy Soul; whether He will condemn, or acquit thee in Judgment; nor whether He be the Foundation of thy Happineſs, or *a Stone of Stumbling*, to *break* thee, and *grind thee to Powder*?

(a) 2 Pet. i. 10.

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Powder? How canſt thou open the *Bible*, and read a Chapter, but it ſhould terrify thee? Methinks every Leaf ſhould be to thee as *Belſhazzar's Writing on the Wall*, except only that which draws thee to try and reform. If thou readeſt the *Promiſes*, thou knoweſt not whether they ſhall be fulfilled to thee. If thou readeſt the *Threatnings*, for any Thing thou knoweſt thou readeſt thy own Sentence. No Wonder thou art an Enemy to *plain Preaching*, and ſay of the *Miniſter*, as *Ahab* of the *Prophet*, *I hate him, for he doth not propheſy Good concerning me, but Evil.* How canſt thou without Terror join in *Prayer?* When thou receiveſt the *Sacrament*, thou knoweſt not whether it be thy Bane or Bliſs. What Comfort canſt thou find in thy *Friends*, and *Honours*, and *Houſes*, and *Lands*, till thou knoweſt thou haſt the Love of God with them, and ſhalt have Reſt with him when thou leaveſt them? Offer a Priſoner, before he know his Sentence, either Muſick, or Cloaths, or Preferment; what are they to him, till he know he ſhall eſcape for his Life? for if he knows he muſt die the next Day, it will be ſmall Comfort to die rich or honourable. Methinks it ſhould be ſo with thee, till thou knoweſt thy eternal State. When thou lieſt down to take thy Reſt, methinks the Uncertainty of thy Salvation ſhould keep thee waking, or amaze thee in thy Dreams, and trouble thy Sleep. Doth it not grieve thee to ſee the *People of God* ſo comfortable in their Way to Glory, when thou haſt no good Hope of ever enjoying it thyſelf? How canſt thou think of thy *dying Hour?* Thou knoweſt it is near, and there is no avoiding it, nor any Medicine found out that can prevent it. If thou ſhouldſt die this Day, (and who *knows what a Day may bring forth*) thou art not certain whether thou ſhalt go to Heaven or Hell. And canſt thou be merry, till thou art got out of this dangerous

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dangerous State? What Shift doſt thou make to preſerve thy Heart from Horror, when thou remembereſt the great *Judgment-Day*, and *everlaſting Flames?* When thou heareſt of it, doſt thou not *tremble*, as *Felix?* If the *Keepers ſhook, and became as dead Men*, when they ſaw *the Angel come and roll back the Stone from Chriſt's Sepulchre*; how canſt thou think of living in Hell with Devils, till thou haſt got ſome well-grounded Aſſurance that thou ſhalt eſcape it? Thy Bed is very ſoft, or thy Heart is very hard, if thou canſt ſleep ſoundly in this uncertain Caſe.

§ 3. If this general Uncertainty of the World about their Salvation were remedileſs, then muſt it be borne as other unavoidable Miſeries. But, alas! the common Cauſe is wilful Negligence. Men will not be perſuaded to uſe the Remedy. The great Means to conquer this Uncertainty is *Self-Examination*, or *the ſerious and diligent trying of a Man's Heart and State by the Rule of Scripture.* Either Men underſtand not the Nature and Uſe of this Duty, or elſe they will not be at the Pains to try. *Go through a Congregation of a thouſand Men, and how few of them ſhall you meet with, that ever beſtowed one Hour in all their Lives in a cloſe Examination of their Title to Heaven?* Aſk thy own Conſcience, *Reader*, when was the Time, and where was the Place, that ever thou ſolemnly tookeſt thy Heart to taſk, as in the Sight of God, and didſt examine it by Scripture, whether it be renewed or not? Whether it be holy or not? Whether it be ſet moſt on God or the Creatures, on Heaven or Earth? and when didſt thou follow on this Examination till thou hadſt diſcovered thy Condition, and paſs'd Sentence on thyſelf accordingly? But becauſe this is a Work of ſo high Importance, and ſo commonly neglected, I will therefore ſhew,

——*that it is poſſible by trying to come to a Certainty;*

——*that*

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——*what hinders Men from trying and knowing their State*;——*then offer Motives to examine*;——*and Directions*;——*together with some Marks out of Scripture*, by which you may try, and certainly know, whether you are the People of God or not.

§ 4. (1) *Scripture shews, that Certainty of Salvation may be attained, and ought to be laboured for:* When it tells us so frequently, that the Saints before us have known their Justification and future Salvation: When it declares, that *whosoever believeth in Christ shall not perish, but have everlasting Life*; which it would be in vain to declare, if we cannot know ourselves to be Believers or not: When it makes such a wide Difference between the Children of God, and the Children of the Devil: When it bids us *give Diligence to make our Calling and Election sure*; and earnestly urges us to *examine, prove, know our own selves, whether we be in the Faith*, and whether *Jesus Christ be in us, except we be Reprobates:* Also when its Precepts require us to *rejoice always*, to call *God our Father*, to *live in his Praises*, to *love Christ's Appearing*, to wish that he may *come quickly*, and to *comfort ourselves with* the Mention of *it* But who can do any of these heartily, that is not in some Measure sure that he is the Child of God?

§ 5. (2) *Among the many Hinderances which keep Men from Self-Examination*, we cannot doubt but *Satan will do his Part.* If all the Power he hath, or all the Means and Instruments he can employ, can do it, he will be sure above all Duties to keep you from this. He is loth the Godly should have that Joy, Assurance, and Advantage against Corruption, which the faithful Performance of Self-Examination would procure them. As for the Ungodly, he knows if they should once earnestly examine, they would find out his Deceits, and their own Danger, and so

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be very likely to escape him. How could he get so many Millions to Hell willingly, if they knew they were going thither! And how could they avoid knowing it, if they did but thoroughly try; having such a clear Light and sure Rule in the Scripture to discover it? If the Snare be not hid, the Bird will escape it. Satan knows how to angle for Souls better than to shew them the Hook and Line, or fright them away with a Noise, or with his own Appearance. Therefore he labours to keep them from a searching Ministry; or to keep the Minister from helping them to search; or to take off the Edge of the Word, that it may not *pierce and divide*; or to turn away their Thoughts; or to possess them with Prejudice. Satan knows when the Minister hath provided a searching Sermon, fitted to the State and Necessity of an Hearer; and therefore he will keep him away that Day, if it be possible; or cast him into a Sleep; or steal away the Word by the Cares and Talk of the World; or some Way prevent its Operation.

§ 6. *Another great Hinderance to Self Examination arises from wicked Men.* Their Examples: their merry Company and Discourse; their continually insisting on worldly Concerns; their Railery and Scoffs at godly Persons; also their Persuations, Allurements, and Threats, are each of them exceeding great Temptations to Security. God doth scarce ever open the Eyes of a poor Sinner, to see that his Way is wrong, but presently there is a Multitude of *Satan's Agents* ready to deceive and settle him again in the quiet Possession of his former Master. "What," say they, "do you make a Doubt of your Salvation, who have "lived so well, and done no Body any Harm? "God is merciful, and if such as you shall not be "saved, God help a great many! What do you "think of all your Fore-fathers? And what will "become

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" become of all your Friends and Neighbours that " live as you do? Will they all be damned? Come, " come, if you hearken to theſe Preachers, they will " drive you out of your Wits. Are not all Men " Sinners? And did not Chriſt die to ſave Sinners? " Never trouble your Head with theſe Thoughts, " and you ſhall do well." O how many Thouſands have ſuch Charms kept aſleep in Deceit and Security, till Death and Hell have awakened them! The Lord calls to the Sinner, and tells him, *The Gate is ſtrait, the Way is narrow, and few find it: Try and examine, give Diligence to make ſure.* The World cries, *Never doubt, never trouble yourſelves with theſe Thoughts.* In this Strait, *Sinner*, conſider, it is Chriſt, and not your Fore-fathers, or Neighbours, or Friends, that muſt judge you at laſt; and if Chriſt condemn you, theſe cannot ſave you: Therefore common Reaſon may tell you, that it is not from the Words of ignorant Men, but from the Word of God, you muſt fetch your Hopes of Salvation. When *Ahab* would enquire among the Multitude of flattering Prophets, it was his Death. They can flatter Men into the Snare, but they cannot tell how to bring them out. *Let no Man deceive you with vain Words, for becauſe of theſe Things cometh the Wrath of God upon the Children of Diſobedience; be not ye therefore Partakers with them* (b).

§ 7. *But the greateſt Hinderances are in Men's own Hearts.— — Some are ſo ignorant*, that they know not what Self-Examination is, nor what a Miniſter means when he perſuadeth them to try themſelves: Or they know not that there is any Neceſſity for it; but think every Man is bound to believe that his Sins are pardoned, whether it be true or falſe, and that it is a great Fault to make any Queſtion of it: Or they

(b) Epheſ. v. 6, 7.

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not think that Assurance can be attained: Or that there is any great Difference between one Man and another, but that we are all Christians, and therefore need not trouble ourselves any further: Or at least they know not wherein the Difference lies. They have as gross an Idea of Regeneration, as *Nicodemus* had.——*Some will not believe*, that God will ever make such a Difference betwixt Men in the Life to come, and therefore will not search themselves whether they differ here.——*Some are so stupified*, say what we can to them, that they lay it not to Heart, but give us the Hearing, and there's an End.——*Some are so possessed with Self-Love and Pride*, that they will not so much as suspect they are in any Danger. Like a proud Tradesman, who scorns the prudent Advice of casting up his Books. As fond Parents will not believe or hear any Evil of their Children.——*Some are so guilty*, that they dare not try; and yet they dare venture on a more dreadful Trial.——*Some are so in Love with Sin, and so dislike the Way of God*, that they dare not try their Ways, lest they be forced from the Course they love, to that which they loath.——*Some are so resolved never to change their present State*, that they neglect Examination as an useless Thing. Before they will seek a new Way, when they have lived so long, and gone so far, they will put their eternal State to the Venture, come of it what will.——*Many Men are so busy in the World*, that they cannot set themselves to the trying their Title to Heaven.——*Others are so clogged with Slothfulness of Spirit*, that they will not be at the Pains of an Hour's Examination of their own Hearts.——*But the most common and dangerous Impediment is that false Faith and Hope, commonly called Presumption*, which bears up the Hearts of the greatest Part of the World, and so keeps them from suspecting their Danger.

§ 8. And

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§ 8. AND if a Man should break through all these Hinderances, and set upon the Duty of Self-Examination, yet *Assurance* is not presently attained. Too many deceive themselves in their Enquiries after it, through one or other of the following Causes.—— *There is such Confusion and Darkness in the Soul of Man, especially of an unregenerate Man,* that he can scarcely tell what he doth, or what is in him. As in a House, where nothing is in its proper Place, it will be difficult to find what is wanted; so it is in the Heart where all Things are in Disorder.——*Most Men accustom themselves to be Strangers at Home,* and too little observe the Temper and Motions of their own Hearts. ——*Many are resolved what to judge before they try.* Like a bribed Judge, who examines as if he would judge uprightly, when he is previously resolved which Way the Cause shall go.——*Men are partial in their own Cause*; ready to think their great Sins small, and their small Sins none; their Gifts of Nature to be the Work of Grace, and to say, *All these have I kept from my Youth; I am rich, and increased in Goods, and have need of nothing.*——*Most Men search but by the Halves.* If it will not easily and quickly be done, they are discouraged, and leave off.——*They try themselves by false Marks and Rules*; not knowing wherein the Truth of Christianity doth consist; some looking beyond, and some short of the Scripture-Standard. ——*And frequently they miscarry in this Work, by attempting it in their own Strength.* As some expect the Spirit should do it without them, so others attempt it themselves without seeking or expecting the Help of the Spirit. Both these will certainly miscarry in their Assurance.

§ 9. SOME other Hindrances keep even true Christians from comfortable Certainty. As for Instance; ——*The Weakness of Grace.* Small Things are hardly

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discerned. Most Christians content themselves with a small Measure of Grace, and do not follow on to spiritual Strength and Manhood. The chief Remedy for such would be, to follow on their Duty, till their Graces be increased. Wait upon God in the Use of his prescribed Means, and he will undoubtedly bless you with Increase. Oh that Christians would bestow most of that Time in getting more Grace, which they bestow in anxious Doubtings whether they have any or none; and lay out those serious Affections in praying for more Grace, which they bestow in fruitless Complaints! I beseech thee, *Christian*, take this Advice as from God; and then, when thou believest strongly, and lovest fervently, thou canst no more doubt of thy Faith and Love, than a Man that is very hot can doubt of his Warmth, or a Man that is strong and lusty can doubt of his being alive.——*Christians hinder their own Comfort by looking more at Signs, which tell them what they are, than at Precepts, which tell them what they should do.* As if their present Case must needs be their everlasting Case; and if they be now unpardoned, there were no Remedy. Were he not mad, that would lie weeping because he is not pardoned, when his Prince stands by all the while offering him a Pardon, and persuading him to accept of it? Justifying Faith, *Christian*, is *not thy Persuasion of God's special Love to thee*, but *thy accepting Christ to make thee lovely.* It is far better to accept Christ as offered, than spend so much Time in doubting whether we have Christ or no.——*Another Cause of Distress to Christians is, their mistaking Assurance for the Joy that sometimes accompanies it.* As if a Child should take himself for a Son no longer, than while he sees the Smiles of his Father's Face, or hears the comfortable Expressions of his Mouth: And as if the Father ceased to be a Father, whenever he ceased those

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those Smiles and Speeches.——*The Trouble of Souls is also increased by their not knowing the ordinary Way of God's conveying Comfort.* They think they have nothing to do but to wait when God will bestow it. But they must know, that the Matter of their Comfort is in the Promises, and thence they must fetch it as often as they expect it, by daily and diligently meditating upon the Promises, and in this Way they may expect the Spirit will communicate Comfort to their Souls. The Joy of the Promises, and the Joy of the Holy Ghost, are one.——Add to this, *their expecting a greater Measure of Assurance than God usually bestows.* As long as they have any Doubting, they think they have no Assurance. They consider not that there are many Degrees of Certainty. While they are here, they shall *know but in Part.*——Add also, *their deriving their Comfort at first from insufficient Grounds.* This may be the Case of a gracious Soul, who hath better Grounds, but doth not see them. As an Infant hath Life before he knoweth it, and many Misapprehensions of himself and other Things, yet it will not follow that he hath no Life. So when Christians find a Flaw in their first Comforts, they are apt to judge it a Flaw in their Safety.——*Many continue under Doubting, through the exceeding Weakness of their natural Parts.* Many honest Hearts have weak Heads, and know not how to perform the Work of Self Trial. They will acknowledge the Premises, and yet deny the apparent Conclusion. If God do not some other Way supply the Defect of their Reason, I see not how they should have clear and settled Peace.——*One great and too common Cause of Distress is, the secret maintaining some known Sin.* This abates the Degree of our Graces, and so makes them more undiscernable. It obscureth that which it destroyeth not; for it beareth such Sway, that Grace is not in Action, nor seems to stir, nor is scarce heard

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speak for the Noise of this Corruption. It puts out, or dimmeth the Eye of the Soul, and stupifies it, that it can neither see nor feel its own Condition. But especially it provokes God to withdraw himself, his Comforts, and the Assistance of his Spirit, without which we may search long enough before we have Assurance. God hath made a Separation between Sin and Peace. As long as thou dost cherish thy Pride, thy Love of the World, the Desires of the Flesh, or any unchristian Practice, thou expectest Comfort in vain. If any Man *setteth up his Idols in his Heart, and putteth the Stumbling-Block of his Iniquity before his Face, and cometh to a* Minister, or to God, *to enquire* for Comfort; instead of comforting him, God *will answer him that cometh, according to the Multitude of his Idols* (c).——*Another very great and common Cause of the Want of Comfort is, when Grace is not kept in constant and lively Exercise.* The Way of painful Duty, is the Way of fullest Comfort. Peace and Comfort are Christ's great Encouragements to Faithfulness and Obedience; and therefore, tho' our Obedience does not merit them, yet they usually rise and fall with our Diligence in Duty. As Prayer must have Faith and Fervency to procure it Success, besides the Blood and Intercession of Christ, so must all other Parts of our Obedience. If thou grow seldom, and customary, and cold in Duty, especially in thy secret Prayers to God, and yet findest no Abatement in thy Joys, I cannot but fear thy Joys are either carnal or diabolical. Besides, Grace is never apparent and sensible to the Soul, but while it is in Action; therefore Want of Action must cause Want of Assurance. And the Action of the Soul upon such excellent Objects naturally bringeth Consolation with it. The very Act of loving God in Christ

(c) Ezek. xiv. 3--9.

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Christ is inexpressibly sweet. The Soul that is best furnished with Grace, when it is not in Action, is like a Lute well stringed and tuned, which while it lieth still maketh no more Musick than a common Piece of Wood; but when it is handled by a skilful Musician, the Melody is delightful. Some Degree of Comfort follows every good Action, as Heat accompanies Fire, and as Beams and Influence issue from the Sun. A Man that is cold, should labour till Heat be excited; so he that wants Assurance, must not stand still, but exercise his Graces, till his Doubts vanish.——*The Want of Consolation in the Soul is also very commonly owing to bodily Melancholy.* It is no more Wonder for a conscientious Man, under Melancholy, to doubt, and fear, and despair, than for a sick Man to groan, or a Child to cry when it is chastised. Without the *Physician* in this Case, the Labours of the *Divine* are usually in vain. You may silence, but you cannot comfort them. You may make them confess they have some Grace, and yet cannot bring them to the comfortable Conclusion. All the good Thoughts of their State which you can possibly help them to, are seldom above a Day or two old. They cry out of Sin, and the Wrath of God, when the chief Cause is in their bodily Distemper.

§ 10. (3) *As for Motives to persuade to the Duty of Self-Examination,* I intreat you to consider the following.——*To be deceived about your Title to Heaven is very easy.* Many are now in Hell, that never suspected any Falshood in their Hearts, that excelled in worldly Wisdom, that lived in the clear Light of the Gospel, and even preached against the Negligence of others.——*To be mistaken in this great Point is also very common.* It is the Case of most in the World. In the *old World*, and in *Sodom*, we find none that were in

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any Fear of Judgment. Almoſt all Men among us verily look to be ſaved; yet Chriſt tells us, *there be few that find the ſtrait Gate, and narrow Way, which leadeth unto Life* (d). And if ſuch Multitudes are deceived, ſhould not we ſearch the more diligently, leſt we ſhould be deceived as well as they?——*Nothing is more dangerous than to be thus miſtaken.* If the Godly judge their State worſe than it is, the Conſequences of this Miſtake will be ſorrowful; but the Miſchief flowing from the Miſtake of the Ungodly is unſpeakable. It will exceedingly confirm them in the Service of Satan. It will render ineffectual the Means that ſhould do them good. It will keep a Man from compaſſionating his own Soul. It is in a Caſe of the greateſt Moment, where everlaſting Salvation or Damnation is to be determined. And if you miſtake till Death, you are undone for ever. Seeing then the Danger is ſo great, what wiſe Man would not follow the Search of his Heart both Night and Day, till he were aſſured of his Safety?——*Conſider how ſmall the Labour of this Duty is, in Compariſon of that Sorrow which followeth its Neglect.* You can endure to toil and ſweat from Year to Year, to prevent Poverty; and why not ſpend a little Time in Self Examination, to prevent eternal Miſery?——*By neglecting this Duty, you can ſcarce do Satan a greater Pleaſure, nor yourſelf a greater Injury.* It is the grand Deſign of the Devil in all his Temptations, to deceive you, and keep you ignorant of your Danger, till you feel the everlaſting Flames; and will you join with him to deceive yourſelf? If you do this for him, you do the greateſt Part of his Work. And hath he deſerved ſo well of you, that you ſhould aſſiſt him in ſuch a Deſign as your Damnation?——*The Time is nigh when God will ſearch you.* If it be but in this Life by

(d) Matt. vii. 14.

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by Affliction, it will make you wiſh, that you had tried and *judged yourſelves*, that you might have eſcaped the Judgment of God. It was a terrible Voice to *Adam*, *Where art thou? Haſt thou eaten of the Tree?* And to *Cain*, *Where is thy Brother?* Men *conſider not in their Hearts, that I*, ſaith the Lord, *remember all their Wickedneſs; now their own Doings have beſet them about, they are before my Face* (e).——*Conſider alſo, what would be the ſweet Effects of this Self-Examination.* If thou be upright and godly, it will lead thee ſtrait towards Aſſurance of God's Love; if thou be not, though it will trouble thee at the preſent, yet it will tend to thy Happineſs, and at length lead thee to the Aſſurance of that Happineſs. Is it not a deſirable Thing to know what ſhall befal us hereafter? eſpecially what ſhall befal our Souls? and what Place and State we muſt be in for ever? And as the very *Knowledge* itſelf is deſirable; how much greater will the *Comfort* be of that Certainty of Salvation? What ſweet Thoughts wilt thou have of God? All that Greatneſs and Juſtice, which is the Terror of others, will be thy Joy. How ſweet may be thy Thoughts of Chriſt, and the Blood he hath ſhed, and the Benefits he hath procured? How welcome will the Word of God be to thee, and *how beautiful the* very *Feet of thoſe that bring* it? How ſweet will be the Promiſes, when thou art ſure they are thine own? The very Threatenings will occaſion thy Comfort, to remember that thou haſt eſcaped them. What Boldneſs and Comfort mayſt thou then have in Prayer, when thou canſt ſay, *our Father*, in full Aſſurance? It will make the Lord's Supper a refreſhing Feaſt to thy Soul. It will multiply the Sweetneſs of every common Mercy. How comfortably mayſt thou then undergo all Afflictions? How will it ſweeten thy Fore-

(e) Eccl. vii. 2.

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thoughts of Death and Judgment, of Heaven and Hell? How lively will it make thee in the Work of the Lord, and how profitable to all around thee? What Vigour will it infuse into all thy Graces and Affections, kind'le thy Repentance, inflame thy Love, quicken thy Desires, and confirm thy Faith, be a Fountain of continual Rejoicing, overflow thy Heart with Thankfulness, raise thee high in the delightful Work of Praise, help thee to be heavenly-minded, and render thee persevering in all? All these sweet Effects of Assurance would make thy Life a Heaven upon Earth.

§ 11. THOUGH I am certain these Motives have Weight of Reason in them, yet I am jealous, *Reader*, lest you lay aside the Book, as if you had done, and never set yourself to the Practice of the Duty. The Case in Hand is of the greatest Moment, Whether thou shalt everlastingly live in Heaven or Hell? I here request thee, in Behalf of thy Soul; nay, I charge thee, in the Name of the Lord, that thou defer no longer, but take thy Heart to task in good earnest, and think with thyself, "Is it so easy, so common, "and so dangerous to be mistaken? Are there so "many wrong Ways? Is the Heart so deceitful? "Why then do I not search into every Corner, till "I know my State? Must I so shortly undergo the "Trial at the Bar of Christ? And do I not presently "try myself? What a Case were I in, if I should "then miscarry? May I know by a little diligent "Enquiry now? And do I stick at the Labour?" But perhaps thou wilt say, "I know not how to do "it." In that I am now to give thee Directions; but, alas! it will be in vain, if thou art not resolved to practice them. Wilt thou, therefore, before thou goest any further, here promise before the Lord, to set thyself upon the speedy Performance of the Duty accord-

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according to the Directions I shall lay down from the Word of God. I demand nothing unreasonable or impossible. It is but to bestow a few Hours, to know what shall become of thee for ever. If a Neighbour, or Friend, desire but an Hour's Time of thee in Conversation, or Business, or any Thing in which thou mayst be of Service, surely thou wouldst not deny it; how much less shouldst thou deny this to thyself in so great an Affair? I pray thee take from me this Request, as if, in the Name of Christ, I presented it to thee on my Knees; and I will betake me on my Knees to Christ again, to beg that he will persuade thy Heart to the Duty.

§ 12. (4) *The Directions how to examine thyself are such as these:*——*Empty thy Mind of all other Cares and Thoughts*, that they may not distract or divide thy Mind. This Work will be enough at once, without joining others with it.——*Then fall down before God in hearty Prayer*, desiring the Assistance of his Spirit, to discover to thee the plain Truth of thy Condition, and to enlighten thee in the whole Progress of this Work.——*Make Choice of the most convenient Time and Place.* Let the Place be the most private; and the Time, when you have nothing to interrupt you; and, if possible, let it be the present Time.——*Have in Readiness, either in Memory or Writing, some Scriptures*, containing the Descriptions of the Saints, and the Gospel Terms of Salvation; and convince thyself thoroughly of their infallible Truth.——*Proceed then to put the Question to thyself.* Let it not be, *whether there be any Good in thee at all?* Nor, *whether thou hast such or such a Degree and Measure of Grace?* But, *whether such or such a saving Grace be in thee in Sincerity, or not?*——*If thy Heart draw back from the Work, force it on.* Lay thy Command upon it. Let Reason interpose, and use its Authority. Yea, lay the Commandi

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Command of God upon it, and charge it to obey upon Pain of his Displeasure. Let Conscience also do its Office, till thy Heart be excited to the Work. ——*Nor let thy Heart trifle away the Time, when it should be diligently at the Work.* Do as the *Psalmist, my Spirit made diligent Search.* He that can prevail with his own Heart, shall also prevail with God. ——*If, after all thy Pains, thou art not resolved, then seek out for Help.* Go to one that is godly, experienced, able, and faithful, and tell him thy Case, and desire his best Advice. Use the Judgment of such a one, as that of a Physician for thy Body; though this can afford thee no full Certainty, yet it may be a great Help to stay and direct thee. But don't make it a Pretence to put off thy own Self-Examination: Only use it as one of the last Remedies, when thy own Endeavours will not serve.——*When thou hast discovered thy true State, pass Sentence on thyself accordingly*; either that thou art a true Christian, or that thou art not. Pass not this Sentence rashly, nor with Self-Flattery, nor from melancholy Terrors; but deliberately, truly, and according to thy Conscience convinced by Scripture and Reason.——*Labour to get thy Heart affected with its Condition, according to the Sentence passed on it.* If graceless, think of thy Misery. If renewed and sanctified, think what a blessed State the Lord hath brought thee into. Pursue these Thoughts, till they have left their Impression on thy Heart.——*Write this Sentence, at least in thy Memory.* "At such a Time, upon thorough Examination, I "found my State to be thus, or thus." Such a Record will be very useful to thee hereafter.——*Trust not to this one Discovery, so as to try no more:* Nor let it hinder thee in the daily Search of thy Ways: Neither be discouraged, if the Trial must be often repeated.——*Especially take Heed, if unregenerate, not to*

conclude

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conclude of thy future State by the present. Don't say, "because I am ungodly, I shall die so; because I am "an Hypocrite, I shall continue so." Don't despair. Nothing but thy Unwillingness can keep thee from Christ, though thou hast hitherto abused him, and dissembled with him.

§ 13. (5) Now let me add *some Marks by which you may try your Title to the Saint's Rest.* I will only mention these two,——*taking God for thy chief Good,* ——and *heartily accepting Christ for thy only Saviour and Lord.*

§ 14. *Every Soul that hath a Title to this Rest, doth place his chief Happiness in God.* This Rest consisteth in the full and glorious Enjoyment of God. He that maketh not God his chief Good, and ultimate End, is in Heart a *Pagan* and a vile *Idolater.* Let me ask then, Dost thou truly account it thy chief Happiness to enjoy the Lord in Glory, or dost thou not? Canst thou say, *the Lord is my Portion? Whom have I in Heaven but thee? and there is none upon Earth that I desire besides thee.* If thou be an Heir of Rest, it is thus with thee. Tho' the Flesh will be pleading for its own Delights, and the World will be creeping into thine Affections; yet in thy ordinary, settled, prevailing Judgment and Affections, thou preferrest God before all Things in the World.——*Thou makest him the very End of thy Desires and Endeavours.* The very Reason why thou hearest and prayest, and desirest to live on Earth, is chiefly this, that thou mayst seek the Lord, and make sure of thy Rest. Though thou dost not seek it so zealously as thou shouldst; yet hath it the chief of thy Desires and Endeavours, so that nothing else is desired or preferred before it.——*Thou wilt think no Labour or Suffering too great to obtain it.* And though the Flesh may sometime shrink, yet thou art resolved and contented

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tented to go through all.——*Thy Esteem for it will also be so high, and thy Affection to it so great, that thou wouldst not exchange thy Title to it, and Hopes of it, for any worldly Good whatsoever.* If God should set before thee an Eternity of earthly Pleasure on one Hand, and the Saint's Rest on the other, and bid thee take thy Choice; thou wouldst refuse the World, and chuse this Rest.——*But if thou art yet unsanctified, then thou dost in thy Heart prefer thy worldly Happiness before God*; and tho' thy Tongue may say, that God is thy chief Good, yet thy Heart doth not so esteem him. For *the World is the chief End of thy Desires and Endeavours.* Thy very Heart is set upon it. Thy greatest Care and Labour is to maintain thy Credit, or fleshly Delights. But the Life to come hath little of thy Care or Labour. Thou didst never perceive so much Excellency in that unseen Glory of another World, as to draw thy Heart after it, and set thee a labouring heartily for it. The little Pains thou bestowest that Way, is but in the second Place. God hath but the World's Leavings, only that Time and Labour which thou canst spare from the World, or those few, cold, and careless Thoughts, which follow thy constant, earnest, and delightful Thoughts of earthly Things. Neither wouldst thou do any Thing at all for Heaven, if thou knewest how to keep the World. But lest thou shouldst be turned into Hell, when thou canst keep the World no longer, therefore thou wilt do something. For the same Reason *thou think'st the Way of God too strict*, and wilt not be persuaded to the constant Labour of walking according to the Gospel-Rule; and when it comes to the Trial, that thou must forsake Christ, or thy worldly Happiness, then thou wilt venture Heaven rather than Earth, and so wilfully deny thy Obedience to God. And certainly *if God would but give thee Leave to live in Health*

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Health and Wealth for ever on Earth, thou wouldſt think it a better State than Reſt. Let them ſeek for Heaven that would, thou wouldſt think this thy chief Happineſs. This is thy Caſe, if thou art yet an unregenerate Perſon, and haſt no Title to the Saint's Reſt.

§ 15. *And* as thou takeſt God for thy chief Good, ſo *thou doſt heartily accept of Chriſt for thy only Saviour and Lord to bring thee to this Reſt.* The *former Mark* was the Sum of the firſt and great Command of the Law, *Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart.* This *ſecond Mark* is the Sum of the Command of the Goſpel, *Believe in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and thou ſhalt be ſaved.* And the Performance of theſe two is the whole of Godlineſs and Chriſtianity. This Mark is but a Definition of Faith. *Doſt thou heartily conſent that Chriſt alone ſhall be thy Saviour?* and no further truſt to thy Duties and Works, than as *Means* appointed in Subordination to him? not looking at them as in the *leaſt Meaſure* able to ſatisfy the Curſe of the Law, or as a legal Righteouſneſs, or any Part of it? but content to truſt thy Salvation on the Redemption made by Chriſt? *Art thou alſo content to take him for thy only Lord and King,* to govern and guide thee by his Laws and Spirit? And to obey him, even when he commandeth the hardeſt Duties, and thoſe which moſt croſs the Deſires of the Fleſh? Is it thy Sorrow when thou breakeſt thy Reſolution herein? And thy Joy when thou keepeſt cloſeſt in Obedience to him? Wouldſt thou not change thy Lord and Maſter for all the World? Thus it is with every true Chriſtian.——*But if thou be an Hypocrite, it is far otherwiſe.* Thou mayſt call Chriſt thy Lord and thy Saviour; but thou never foundeſt thyſelf ſo loſt without him, as to drive thee to ſeek him, and truſt him, and lay thy Salvation on him alone. At leaſt

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least thou didst never heartily consent that he should govern thee as thy Lord, nor resign up thy Soul and Life to be ruled by him, nor take his Word for the Law of thy Thoughts and Actions. It is likely thou art content to be saved from Hell by Christ when thou diest; but in the mean Time he shall command thee no further than will stand with thy Credit, or Pleasure, or other worldly Ends. And if he would give thee Leave, thou hadst far rather live after the World and Flesh, than after the Word and Spirit. And tho' thou mayst now and then have a Motion or Purpose to the contrary; yet this that I have mentioned is the ordinary Desire and Choice of thy Heart. Thou art therefore no true Believer in Christ; for tho' thou confess Him in Words, yet *in Works* thou dost *deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good Work reprobate.* This is the Case of those that shall be shut out of the Saint's Rest.

§ 16. OBSERVE, *it is the Consent of your Hearts, or Wills, which I especially lay down to be enquired after.* I do not ask, *whether thou be assured of Salvation?* nor, *whether thou canst believe that thy Sins are pardoned, and that thou art beloved of God in Christ?* These are *no Parts of justifying Faith*, but *excellent Fruits* of it, and they that receive them, are comforted by them; but *perhaps thou mayst never receive them whilst thou livest, and yet be a true Heir of Rest.* Do not say then, "I cannot believe that my Sins are pardoned, "or that I am in God's Favour, and therefore I am "no true Believer." This is a most mistaken Conclusion. The Question is, Whether thou dost heartily accept of Christ, that thou mayst be pardoned, reconciled to God, and so saved? Dost thou consent that he shall be thy Lord who hath bought thee, and that he shall bring thee to Heaven in his own Way? This is justifying, saving Faith, and the Mark by which

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which thou must try thyself. Yet still observe, that *all this* Consent must be hearty and real, not feigned or with Reservations. It is not saying, as that dissembling Son, *I go, Sir; and went not.* If any have more of the Government of thee than Christ, thou art not his Disciple. I am sure these *two Marks* are such as every Christian hath, and none but sincere Christians. O that the Lord would now persuade thee to the close Performance of this Self-Trial! That thou mayst not tremble with Horror of Soul, when the Judge of all the World shall try thee; but be so able to prove thy Title to Rest, that the Prospect and Approach of Death and Judgment may raise thy Spirits, and fill thee with Joy!

§ 17. On the whole, as ever *Christians* would have Comforts that will not deceive them, let them make it the great Labour of their Lives to grow in Grace, to strengthen and advance the Interest of Christ in their Souls, and to weaken and subdue the Interest of the Flesh. Deceive not yourselves with a Persuasion, that *Christ hath done all*, and *left you nothing to do.* To *overcome the World*, the *Flesh*, and the *Devil*; and in order to that, to stand always armed upon our *watch*, and valiantly and patiently to *fight* it out, is of great Importance to our *Assurance* and *Salvation.* Indeed it is so great a Part of our *Baptismal Vow*, that he, who performeth it not, is no more than a *nominal Christian.* Not to every one that *presumptuously believeth*, but *to him that overcometh, will Christ give to eat of the hidden Manna, and will give him a white Stone, and in the Stone a new Name written, which no Man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it: He shall eat of the Tree of Life, which is in the Midst of the Paradise of God, and shall not be hurt of the second Death. Christ will confess his Name before his Father, and before his Angels,*

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Angels, and make him a Pillar in the Temple of God, and he shall go no more out, and will write upon him the Name of his God, and the Name of the City of his God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of Heaven from his God, and will write upon him his new Name. Yea, *He will grant to him to sit with him on his Throne, even as He also overcame, and is set down with his Father on his Throne. He that hath an Ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches* (f).

(f) Rev. ii. 7, 11, 17. iii. 5, 12, 21, 22.

CHAP.

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CHAP. IX.

The Duty of the People of God to excite others to ſeek this Reſt.

§ 1. *The Author laments that Chriſtians do ſo little to help others to obtain the Saint's Reſt*; § 2. (I) *ſhews the Nature of this Duty*; *particularly*, § 3. (1) *in having our Hearts affected with the Miſery of our Brethren's Souls*, § 4—6. (2) *in taking all Opportunities to inſtruct them in the Way of Salvation*, § 7. (3) *in promoting their Profit by publick Ordinances*; § 8. (II) *aſſigns various Reaſons why this Duty is ſo much neglected*, § 9. *and anſwers ſome Objections againſt it*: § 10—13. *Then* (III) *urges to the Diſcharge of it, by ſeveral Conſiderations*, § 14. *addreſſed to ſuch as have Knowledge, Learning, and Utterance*, § 15. *thoſe that are acquainted with Sinners*, § 16. *Phyſicians that attend dying Men*, § 17. *Perſons of Wealth and Power*, § 18, *Miniſters*, § 19. *and thoſe that are intruſted with the Care of Children or Servants*. § 20. *The Chapter concludes with an earneſt Requeſt to Chriſtian Parents to be faithful to their Truſt.*

§ 1. HATH God ſet before us ſuch a glorious Prize as the Saint's Reſt, and made us capable of ſuch inconceivable Happineſs? Why then do not all the Children of this Kingdom exert themſelves more to help others to the Enjoyment of it? Alas, how little are poor Souls about us beholden to moſt

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most of us! We see the Glory of the Kingdom, and they do not: We see the Misery of those that are out of it, and they do not: We see them wandering quite out of the Way, and know if they hold on, they can never come there; and they themselves discern it not. And yet we will not seriously shew them their Danger and Error, and help to bring them into the Way, that they may live. Alas, how few Christians are there to be found, that set themselves with all their Might to save Souls! No Thanks to us, if Heaven be not empty, and if the Souls of our Brethren perish not for ever. Considering how important this Duty is, to the Glory of God, and the Happiness of Men, I will shew——*how it is to be performed*;——*why it is so much neglected*;——and then *offer some Considerations to perswade to it.*

§ 2. (1) *The Duty of helping others to discern their Title to the Saint's Rest* doth not mean, that every Man should turn a *publick Preacher*, or that any should go beyond the Bounds of their *particular Callings*; much less does it consist in promoting a *Party Spirit*; and least of all in *speaking against Men's Faults behind their Backs, and be silent before their Faces.* This Duty is of another Nature, and consists in the following Things;——*in having our Hearts affected with the Misery of our Brethren's Souls*,——*in taking all Opportunities to instruct them in the Way of Salvation*,——*and in promoting their Profit by Publick Ordinances.*

§ 3. (1) *Our Heart must be affected with the Misery of our Brethren's Souls.* We must be compassionate towards them, and yearn after their Recovery and Salvation. If we earnestly longed after their Conversion, and our Hearts were solicitous to do them Good, it would set us on work, and God would usually bless it.

§ 4. (2)

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§ 4. (2) *We must take all Opportunities we possibly can, to instruct them how to attain Salvation.* If the Person be *ignorant*, labour to make him understand *the chief Happiness of Man, how far he was once possessed of it; the Covenant God then made with him; how he broke it; what Penalty he incurred; and what Misery he brought himself into:* Teach him *his Need of a Redeemer; how Christ did mercifully interpose, and bear the Penalty; what the New Covenant is; how Men are drawn to Christ; and what are the Riches and Privileges which Believers have in him.* If he is not moved by these Things, then shew him *the Excellency of the Glory he neglects; the Extremity and Eternity of the Torments of the Damned; the Justice of enduring them for wilfully refusing Grace; the Certainty, Nearness, and Terrors of Death and Judgment; the Vanity of all Things below; the Sinfulness of Sin; the Preciousness of Christ; the Necessity of Regeneration, Faith, and Holiness; and the true Nature of them* If after all, you find him entertaining false Hopes, then *urge him to examine his State; shew him the Necessity of doing so; help him in it; nor leave him till you have convinced him of his Misery and Remedy. Shew him how vain and destructive it is to join Christ and his Duties, to compose his justifying Righteousness.* Yet *be sure to draw him to the Use of all Means; such as hearing and reading the Word, calling upon God, and associating with the Godly: Persuade him to forsake Sin, avoid all Temptations to Sin, especially evil Companions, and to wait patiently on God in the Use of Means, as the Way in which God will be found.*

§ 5 But because the Manner of performing this Work is of great Moment, observe therefore these Rules.——*Enter upon it with right Intentions.* Aim at the Glory of God in the Person's Salvation. Do it not to get a Name, or Esteem to thyself, or to bring

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bring Men to depend upon thee, or to get thee Followers, but in Obedience to Chriſt, in Imitation of him, and tender Love to Men's Souls. Do not as as thoſe, who labour to reform their Children or Servants from ſuch Things as are againſt their own Profit or Humour, but never ſeek to ſave their Souls in the Way which God hath appointed.——*Do it ſpeedily.* As you would not have them delay their Return, don't you delay to ſeek their Return. While you are purpoſing to teach and help him, the Man goes deeper in Debt; Wrath is heaping up; Sin taking Root; Cuſtom faſtens him; Temptations to Sin multiply; Conſcience grows ſeared; the Heart hardened; the Devil rules; Chriſt is ſhut out; the Spirit is reſiſted; God is daily diſhonoured; His Law violated; He is without a Servant, and that Service from him which He ſhould have; Time runs on; Death and Judgment are at the Door; and what if the Man die, and drop into Hell, while you are purpoſing to prevent it? If in the Caſe of his bodily Diſtreſs, you muſt *not ſay to him, go, and come again, and To-morrow I will give, when thou haſt it by thee* (a); how much leſs may you delay the Succour of his Soul? That Phyſician is no better than a Murderer, who negligently delayeth till his Patient be dead or paſt Cure. Lay by Excuſes then, and all leſſer Buſineſs, and *exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; leſt any be hardened through the Deceitfulneſs of Sin* (b)—— *Let your Exhortation proceed from Compaſſion and Love.* To jeer and ſcoff, to rail and vilify, is not a likely Way to reform Men, or convert them to God. Go to poor Sinners with Tears in your Eyes, that they may ſee you believe them to be miſerable, and that you unfeignedly pity their Caſe. Deal with them with earneſt humble Intreatings. Let them perceive it

(a) Prov. iii. 28. (b) Heb. iii. 13.

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it is the Desire of your Hearts to do them good; that you have no other End but their everlasting Happiness; and that it is your Sense of their Danger, and your Love to their Souls that forceth you to speak; even because you *know the Terrors of the Lord*, and for Fear you should see them in eternal Torments. Say to them, "Friend, you know I seek no Advantage of my own: The Method to please you, and keep your Friendship, were to sooth you in your Way, or let you alone; but Love will not suffer me to see you perish, and be silent. I seek nothing at your Hands, but that which is necessary to your own Happiness. It is yourself that will have the Gain and Comfort, if you come to Christ." If we were thus to go to every ignorant, wicked Neighbour, what blessed Fruit should we quickly see!—— *Do it with all possible Plainness and Faithfulness.* Don't make their Sins less than they are, nor encourage them in a false Hope. If you see the Case dangerous, speak plainly; "Neighbour, I am afraid God hath "not yet renewed your Soul; I doubt you are not "yet recovered *from the Power of Satan to God*; I "doubt you have not chosen Christ above all, nor "unfeignedly taken him for your sovereign Lord. If "you had, surely you durst not so easily disobey him, "nor neglect his Worship in your Family, and in "publick: You could not so eagerly follow the "World, and talk of nothing but the Things of the "World. If you were *in Christ*, you would be *a "new Creature*; *old Things* would be *passed away*, "*and all Things* would *become new*: You would have "new Thoughts, new Talk, new Company, new "Endeavours, and a new Conversation: Certainly "without these you can never be saved: You may "think otherwise, and hope better as long as you "will, but your Hopes will all deceive you, and

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" periſh with you." Thus muſt you deal faithfully with Men, if ever you intend to do them good. It is not in curing Men's Souls, as in curing their Bodies, where they muſt not know their Danger, leſt it hinder the Cure. They are here Agents in their own Cure, and if they know not their Miſery, they will never bewail it, nor know their Need of a Saviour.——— *Do it alſo ſeriouſly, zealouſly, and effectually.* Labour to make Men know, that Heaven and Hell are not Matters to be played with, or paſſed over with a few careleſs Thoughts. " Is it moſt certain, that one of " theſe Days thou ſhalt be in everlaſting Joy or Tor- " ment; and doth it not awaken thee? Are there ſo " few that find the Way of Life? So many that go " the Way of Death? Is it ſo hard to eſcape? So eaſy " to miſcarry? And yet do you ſit ſtill and trifle? " What do you mean? The World is paſſing away: " Its Pleaſures, Honours, and Profits are fading and " leaving you: Eternity is a little before you: God " is juſt and jealous; His Threatnings are true: The " Great Day will be terrible: Time runs on: Your " Life is uncertain: You are far behind Hand: Your " Caſe is dangerous: If you die To-morrow, how " unready are you! With what Terror will your " Souls go out of your Bodies! And do you yet " loiter? Conſider, God is all this while waiting " your Leiſure: His Patience beareth: His Long- " ſuffering forbeareth: His Mercy intreateth you: " Chriſt offers you his Blood and Merits: The Spirit " is perſuading: Conſcience is accuſing: Satan waits " to have you: This is your Time; Now or Never. " Had you rather burn in Hell, than repent on Earth? " have Devils your Tormentors, than Chriſt your " Governor? Will you renounce your Part in God " and Glory, rather than renounce your Sins? O " Friends, what do you think of theſe Things?

" God

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"God hath made you Men; do not renounce your "Reason where you should chiefly use it." Alas, it is not a few dull Words between jest and earnest, between sleep and awake, that will rouze a dead-hearted Sinner. If a House be on fire, you will not make a cold Oration on the Nature and Danger of Fire; but will run, and cry, Fire, Fire. To tell a Man of his Sins, as softly as *Eli* did his Sons; or reprove him, as gently as *Jehoshaphat* did *Ahab*, *Let not the King say so*, usually doth as much Harm as Good. Lothness to displease Men, makes us undo them.

§ 6. YET lest you run into Extremes, I advise you to *do it with Prudence and Discretion.*——*Chuse the fittest Season.* Deal not with Men when they are in a Passion, or where they will take it for a Disgrace. When the Earth is soft, the Plough will enter. Take a Man when he is under Affliction, or newly impressed under a Sermon. Christian Faithfulness requires us, not only to do Good when it falls in our Way, but to watch for Opportunities.——*Suit yourself also to the Quality and Temper of the Person.* You must deal with the *Ingenious*, more by *Argument* than *Persuasion*. There is need of *both* to the *Ignorant*. The *Affections* of the *Convinced* should be chiefly excited. The *Obstinate* must be *sharply reproved*. The *Timorous* must be dealt with *tenderly*. Love, and Plainness, and Seriousness, take with all; but Words of Terror some can scarce bear. Use also the *aptest Expressions*. Unseemly Language makes the Hearers loath the Food they should live by; especially if they be Men of curious Ears, and carnal Hearts.——*Let all your Reproofs and Exhortations be backed with the Authority of God.* Let Sinners be convinced that you speak not of your own Head. Turn them to the very *Chapter* and *Verse* where their Sin is condemned,

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and their Duty commanded. The Voice of Man is contemptible, but the Voice of God is awful and terrible. They may reject your Words, that dare not reject the Words of the Almighty.——*Be frequent with Men in this Duty of Exhortation.* If we are *always to pray, and not to faint*, becauſe God will have us importunate with himſelf; the ſame Courſe, no doubt, will be moſt prevailing with Men. Therefore we are commanded to *exhort one another daily* (c); and *with all Long ſuffering* (d). The Fire is not always brought out of the Flint at one Stroke; nor Men's Affections kindled at the firſt Exhortation. And if they were, yet if they be not followed, they will ſoon grow cold again. Follow Sinners with your loving and earneſt Intreaties, and give them no Reſt in their Sin. This is true Charity, the Way to ſave Men's Souls, and will afford you Comfort upon Review.——*Strive to bring all your Exhortations to an Iſſue.* If we ſpeak the moſt convincing Words, but all our Care is over with our Speech, we ſhall ſeldom proſper in our Labours: But God uſually bleſſes their Labours, whoſe very Heart is ſet upon the Converſion of their Hearers, and who are therefore enquiring after the Succeſs of their Work. If you reprove a Sin, ceaſe not till the Sinner promiſes you to leave it, and avoid the Occaſions of it. If you are exhorting to a Duty, urge for a Promiſe to ſet upon it preſently. If you would draw Men to Chriſt, leave not, till you have made them confeſs the Miſery of their preſent unregenerate State, and the Neceſſity of Chriſt, and of a Change, and have promiſed you to fall cloſe to the Uſe of Means. O that all Chriſtians would take this Courſe with all their Neighbours that are enſlaved to Sin, and Strangers to Chriſt!——Once more, *be ſure your Example exhort as well as your Words.* Let them

(c) Heb. iii. 13. (d) 2 Tim. iv. 2.

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them see you constant in all the Duties you persuade them to. Let them see in your Lives that Superiority to the World, which your Lips recommend. Let them see by your constant Labours for Heaven, that you indeed believe what you would have them believe. A holy and heavenly Life, is a continual Pain to the Consciences of Sinners around you, and continually sollicits them to change their Course.

§ 7. (3) BESIDES the Duty of private Admonition, *you must endeavour to help Men to profit by the publick Ordinances.* In order to that,——*endeavour to procure for them faithful Ministers, where they are wanting. How shall they hear without a Preacher* (e)*?* Improve your Interest and Diligence to this End, till you prevail. Extend your Purses to the utmost. How many Souls may be saved by the Ministry you have procured! It is a higher and nobler Charity, than relieving their Bodies. What Abundance of Good might great Men do, if they would support in Academical Education, such Youth as they have first carefully chosen for their Ingenuity and Piety, till they should be fit for the Ministry?——*And when a faithful Ministry is obtained, help poor Souls to receive the Fruit of it.* Draw them constantly to attend it. Remind them often what they have heard; and, if it be possible, let them hear it repeated in their Families, or elsewhere. Promote their frequent Meeting together, besides publickly in the Congregation; *not as a separate Church, but as a Part of the Church more diligent than the rest in redeeming Time, and helping the Souls of each other Heaven-ward.*—— *Labour also to keep the Ordinances and Ministry in Esteem.* No Man will be much wrought on by that which he despiseth. An *Apostle* says, *We beseech you, Brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are*

(e) Rom. x. 14.

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over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in Love for their Works Sake (f).

§ 8. (II) LET us now a little enquire, *what may be the Causes of the gross Neglect of this Duty*; that the Hinderances being discovered, may the more easily be overcome.——*One Hinderance is, Men's own Sin and Guilt.* They have not themselves been ravished with heavenly Delights; how then should they draw others so earnestly to seek them? They have not felt their own lost Condition, nor their Need of Christ, nor the renewing Work of the Spirit; how then can they discover these to others? They are guilty of the Sins they should reprove, and this makes them ashamed to reprove.——Another is, *a secret Infidelity prevailing in Men's Hearts.* Did we verily believe, that all the Unregenerate and Unholy shall be eternally tormented, how could we hold our Tongues, or avoid bursting into Tears, when we look them in the Face? Especially when they are our near and dear Friends? Thus doth secret Unbelief consume the Vigour of each Grace and Duty. O *Christians*, if you did verily believe, that your ungodly Neighbours, Wife, Husband, or Child, should certainly lie for ever in Hell, except they be thoroughly changed before Death shall snatch them away, would not this make you address them Day and Night till they were persuaded? Were it not for this cursed Unbelief, our own and our Neighbour's Souls would gain more by us than they do.——*These Attempts are also much hindered by our Want of Charity and Compassion for Men's Souls.* We *look on* miserable Souls, *and pass by*, as the *Priest* and *Levite* by the *wounded Man.* What tho the Sinner, wounded by Sin, and captivated by Satan, do not desire thy Help himself; yet his Misery cries aloud. If God had not heard the Cry:

(f) 1 Thess. v. 12, 13.

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Cry of our Miseries, before he heard the Cry of our Prayers, and been moved by his own Pity, before he was moved by our Importunity, we might long have continued the Slaves of Satan. You will pray to God for them, to open their Eyes, and turn their Hearts; and why not endeavour their Conversion, if you desire it? And if you do not desire it, why do you ask it? Why do you not pray them to consider and return, as well as pray God to convert and turn them? If you should see your Neighbour fallen into a Pit, and should pray to God to help him out, but neither put forth your Hand to help him, nor once direct him to help himself, would not any Man censure you for Cruelty and Hypocrisy? It is as true of the Soul as the Body, If any Man *seeth his Brother have Need, and shutteth up his Bowels of Compassion from him, how dwelleth the Love of God in him?* or what Love hath he to his Brother's Soul?——*We are also hindered by a base, Man-pleasing Disposition.* We are so desirous to keep in Credit and Favour with Men, that it makes us most unconscionably neglect our known Duty. He is a foolish and unfaithful Physician, that will let a sick Man die for fear of troubling him. If our Friends are distracted, we please them in nothing that tends to their Hurt. And yet when they are beside themselves in Point of Salvation, and in their Madness posting on to Damnation, we will not stop them, for fear of displeasing them. How can we be Christians, that *love the Praise of Men more than the Praise of God?* For if we *seek to please Men, we shall not be the Servants of Christ.*——*It is common to be hindered by sinful Bashfulness.* When we should shame Men out of their Sins, we are ourselves ashamed of our Duties. May not these Sinners condemn us, when they blush not to swear, be drunk, or neglect the Worship of God;

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and we bluſh to tell them of it, and perſuade them from it? Baſhfulneſs is unſeemly in Caſes of Neceſſity. It is not a Work to be aſhamed of, to obey God in perſuading Men from their Sins to Chriſt. *Reader*, hath not thy Conſcience told thee of thy Duty many a Time, and put thee on to ſpeak to poor Sinners; and yet thou haſt been aſhamed to open thy Mouth, and ſo let them alone to ſink or ſwim? O read and tremble, ***Whoſoever ſhall be aſhamed of me, and of my Words, in this adulterous and ſinful Generation, of him alſo ſhall the Son of Man be aſhamed, when he cometh in the Glory of his Father, with the holy Angels*** (g).——*An idle and impatient Spirit hindereth us.* It is an ungrateful Work, and ſometimes makes Men our Enemies. Beſides, it ſeldom ſucceeds at the firſt, except it be followed on. You muſt be long teaching the Ignorant, and perſuading the Obſtinate. We conſider not what Patience God uſed towards us, when we were in our Sins. Woe to us, if God had been as impatient with us, as we are with others.——*Another Hinderance is, Self-ſeeking. All ſeek their own, not the Things which are Jeſus Chriſt's* (h), and their Brethren's.——*With many Pride is a great Impediment.* If it were to ſpeak with a great Man, and it would not diſpleaſe him, they would do it. But to go among the Poor, and take Pains with them in their Cottages; where is the Perſon that will do it? Many will rejoice in being inſtrumental to convert a Gentleman; and they have good Reaſon; but overlook the Multitude; as if the Souls of all were not alike to God. Alas, theſe Men little conſider how low Chriſt ſtooped to us! Few *rich*, and *noble*, and *wiſe are called.* It is the Poor that receive the glad Tidings of the Goſpel.——*And with ſome their Ignorance of the Duty hindereth them from performing*

(g) Mark viii, 38. (h) Phil. ii. 21.

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ing it. Either they know it not to be a Duty, or at least not to be their Duty. If this be thy Case, *Reader*, I am in Hope thou art now acquainted with thy Duty, and wilt set upon it.

§ 9. DON'T object to this Duty, that *you are unable to manage an Exhortation*; but either set those on the Work who are more able, or faithfully and humbly use the small Ability you have, and tell them, as a weak Man may do, what God says in his Word.—Decline not the Duty, because *it is your Superior who needs Advice and Exhortation.* Order must be dispensed with in Cases of Necessity. Though it be a Husband, a Parent, a Minister, you must teach him in such a Case. If Parents are in Want, Children must relieve them. If a Husband be sick, the Wife must fill up his Place in Family-Affairs. If the Rich are reduced to Beggary, they must receive Charity. If the Physician be sick, some Body must look to him. So the meanest Servant must admonish his Master, and the Child his Parent, and the Wife her Husband, and the People their Minister; so that it be done when there is real Need, and with all possible Humility, Modesty, and Meekness.——Don't say, *this will make us all Preachers*; for every good Christian is a Teacher, and hath a Charge of his Neighbour's Soul Every Man is a Physician, when a regular Physician cannot be had, and when the Hurt is so small that any Man may relieve it; and in the same Cases every Man must be a Teacher.——Don't *despair of Success.* Cannot God give it? And must it not be by Means?——Don't plead, *it will only be casting Pearls before Swine.* When you are in Danger to be torn in Pieces, Christ would have you forbear; but what is that to you that are in no such Danger? As long as they will hear, you have Encouragement to speak, and may not cast them off as contemptible

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Swine.——Say not, *it is a Friend on whom I much depend, and by telling him his Sin and Misery, I may lose his Love, and be undone.* Is his Love more to be valued than his Safety? or thy own Benefit by him, than the Salvation of his Soul? or wilt thou connive at his Damnation, becauſe he is thy Friend? Is that thy beſt Requital of his Friendſhip? Hadſt thou rather he ſhould burn in Hell for ever, than thou ſhouldſt loſe his Favour, or the Maintenance thou haſt from him?

§ 10. (III) But that all who fear God may be excited to do their utmoſt to help others to this bleſſed Reſt, let me intreat you to *conſider the following Motives.* As for Inſtance.——*Not only Nature, but eſpecially Grace, diſpoſes the Soul to be communicative of Good.* Therefore to neglect this Work is a Sin both againſt Nature and Grace. Would you not think him unnatural, that would ſuffer his Children or Neighbours to ſtarve in the Streets, while he has Proviſion at Hand? And is not he more unnatural, that will let them eternally periſh, and not open his Mouth to ſave them? An unmerciful, cruel Man, is a Monſter to be abhorred of all. If God had bid you give them all your Eſtates, or lay down your Lives, to ſave them, you would ſurely have refuſed, when you will not beſtow a little Breath to ſave them. Is not the Soul of a Huſband, or Wife, or Child, or Neighbour, worth a few Words? Cruelty to Men's Bodies is a moſt damnable Sin; but to their Souls much more, as the Soul is of greater Worth than the Body, and Eternity than Time. Little know you what many a Soul may now be feeling in Hell, who died in their Sins, for Want of your faithful Admonition.——*Conſider what Chriſt did towards the ſaving of Souls.* He thought them worth his Blood; and ſhall we not think them worth our Breath? Will you not

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not do a little, where Christ hath done so much?—— *Consider what fit Objects of Pity ungodly Souls are.* They are dead in Trespasses and Sins, have not Hearts to feel their Miseries, nor to pity themselves. If others do not pity them, they will have no Pity; for it is the Nature of their Disease to make them pityless to themselves, yea their own most cruel Destroyers. ——*Consider it was once thy own Case.* It was God's Argument to the *Israelites*, to be kind to Strangers, because themselves had been *Strangers in the Land of Egypt.* So should you pity them that are Strangers to Christ, and to the Hopes and Comforts of the Saints, because you were once Strangers to them yourselves. ——*Consider your Relation to them.* It is thy Neighbour, thy Brother, whom thou art bound to love as thyself. *He that loveth not his Brother whom he seeth* daily, *doth not love God whom he* never *saw.* And doth he love his Brother, that will see him go to Hell, and never hinder him?

§ 11. ——*Consider what a Load of Guilt this Neglect lays upon thy own Soul.* Thou art guilty of the Murder and Damnation of all those Souls whom thou dost thus neglect; and of every Sin they now commit; and of all the Dishonour done to God thereby; and of all those Judgments which their Sins bring upon the Town or Country where they live.—— *Consider what it will be, to look upon your poor Friends in eternal Flames, and to think that your Neglect was a great Cause of it.* If you should there perish with them, it would be no small Aggravation of your Torment. If you be in Heaven, it would sure be a sad Thought, were it possible that any Sorrow could dwell there, to hear a Multitude of poor Souls cry out for ever, "O, if you would but have told me "plainly of my Sin and Danger, and set it home, I "might have escaped all this Torment, and been

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" now in Reſt!" What a ſad Voice will this be! ———*Conſider what a Joy it will be in Heaven, to meet theſe there, whom you have been the Means to bring thither.* To ſee their Faces, and join with them for ever in the Praiſes of God, whom you were the happy Inſtruments of bringing to the Knowledge and Obedience of Jeſus Chriſt!——*Conſider how many Souls you may have drawn into the Way of Damnation, or hardened in it.* We have had, in the Days of our Ignorance, our Companions in Sin, whom we enticed, or encouraged. And doth it not become us, to do as much to ſave Men, as we have done to deſtroy them?———*Conſider how diligent are all the Enemies of theſe poor Souls to draw them to Hell.* The Devil is tempting them Day and Night: Their inward Luſts are ſtill working for their Ruin: The Fleſh is ſtill pleading for its Delights: Their old Companions are increaſing their Diſlike of Holineſs. And if no Body be diligent in helping them to Heaven, what is like to become of them?

§ 12. ———*Conſider how deep the Neglect of this Duty will wound, when Conſcience is awakened.* When a Man comes to die, Conſcience will aſk him, " What " Good haſt thou done in thy Life-Time? The " ſaving of Souls is the greateſt good Work; what " haſt thou done towards it? How many haſt thou " dealt faithfully with?" I have oft obſerved, that the Conſciences of dying Men very much wound them for this Omiſſion. For my own Part, when I have been near Death, my Conſcience hath accuſed me more for this than for any Sin: It would bring every ignorant profane Neighbour to my Remembrance, to whom I never made known their Danger: It would tell me, " thou ſhouldſt have gone to them " in private, and told them plainly of their deſperate " Danger, though it had been when thou ſhouldſt " have

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" have eaten or slept, if thou hadst no other Time." Conscience would remind me, how at such, or such a Time, I was in Company with the Ignorant, or was riding by the Way with a wilful Sinner, and had a fit Opportunity to have dealt with him, but did not; or at least did it to little Purpose. The Lord grant I may better obey Conscience while I have Time, that it may have less to accuse me of at Death!——*Consider what a seasonable Time you now have for this Work.* There are Times in which it is not safe to speak; it may cost you your Liberties, or your Lives. Besides, your Neighbours will shortly die, and so will you. Speak to them therefore while you may.——*Consider, tho' this is a Work of greatest Charity, yet every one of you may perform it.* The poorest, as well as the Rich. Every one hath a Tongue to speak to a Sinner.——Once more, *consider the happy Consequences of this Work where it is faithfully done.* You may be instrumental of saving Souls, for which Christ came down and died, and in which the Angels of God rejoice. Such Souls will bless you here and hereafter. God will have much Glory by it. The Church will be multiplied and edified by it. Your own Souls will enjoy more Improvement and Vigour in a divine Life, more Peace of Conscience, more rejoicing in Spirit. Of all the personal Mercies that I ever received, next to the Love of God in Christ to my own Soul, I must most joyfully bless him for the plentiful Success of my Endeavours upon others. O what Fruits then might I have seen, if I had been more faithful! I know we need to be very jealous of our deceitful Hearts in this Point, lest our rejoicing should come from our Pride. Naturally we would have the Praise of every good Work ascribed to ourselves: Yet to imitate our Father in Goodness and Mercy, and to rejoice in the Degree of them we attain

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attain to, is the Duty of every Child of God. I therefore tell you my own Experience, to perſuade you, that if you did but know what a joyful Thing it is, you would follow it Night and Day through the greateſt Diſcouragements.

§ 13. Up then, *every Man* that hath a Tongue, and is *a Servant of Chriſt*, and do ſomething of your Maſter's Work. Why hath he given you a Tongue, but to ſpeak in his Service? And how can you ſerve him more eminently, than in ſaving Souls? He that will pronounce you bleſſed at the laſt Day, and invite you to *the Kingdom prepared for you*, becauſe you *fed him, and cloathed him, and viſited him*, in his poor Members, will ſurely pronounce you bleſſed for ſo great a Work as bringing Souls to his Kingdom. He that ſaith, *the Poor you have always with you*, hath left the Ungodly always with you, that you might ſtill have Matter to exerciſe your Charity upon. If you have the Hearts of *Chriſtians*, or of *Men*, let them yearn towards your ignorant, ungodly Neighbours. Say, as the *Lepers* of *Samaria*, *We do not well; this Day is a Day of good Tidings, and we hold our Peace.* Hath God had ſo much Mercy on you, and will you have no Mercy on your poor Neighbours?—— But as this Duty belongs to all Chriſtians, ſo eſpecially to ſome, according as God hath called them to it, or qualified them for it. To them therefore I will *more particularly addreſs the Exhortation.*

§ 14. *God eſpecially expects this Duty at your Hands, to whom he hath given more Learning and Knowledge, and endued with better Utterance, than your Neighbours.* The Strong are made to help the Weak; and thoſe that ſee muſt direct the Blind. God looketh for this faithful Improvement of your Parts and Gifts, which, if you neglect, it were better you had never received them; for they will but aggravate your Condemnation,

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tion, and be as useless to your own Salvation, as they were to others.

§ 15. *All those that are particularly acquainted with some ungodly Men, and that have peculiar Interest in them, God looks for this Duty at your Hands.* Christ himself did eat and drink with *Publicans* and *Sinners*; but it was only to be their *Physician*, and not their *Companion*. Who knows but God gave you Interest in them to this End, that you might be the Means of their Recovery? They that will not regard the Words of a Stranger, may regard a Brother, or Sister, or Husband, or Wife, or near Friend: Besides that the Bond of Friendship engageth you to more Kindness and Compassion than ordinary.

§ 16. *Physicians, that are much about dying Men, should in a special Manner make Conscience of this Duty.* It is their peculiar Advantage, that they are *at Hand*; that they are with Men *in Sickness and Dangers*, when the Ear is more open, and the Heart less stubborn than in Time of Health; and that Men look upon their *Physician* as a Person *in whose Hand is their Life*; or at least, who may do much to save them; and therefore they will the more regard his Advice. You that are of this *honourable Profession*, don't think this a Work beside your Calling, as if it belonged to none but *Ministers*; except you think it beside your Calling to be compassionate, or to be *Christians*. O help therefore to fit your Patients for Heaven! And whether you see they are for Life or Death, teach them both how to live and die, and give them some *Physick* for their Souls, as you do for their Bodies. Blessed be God, that very many of the chief Physicians of this Age have, by their eminent Piety, vindicated their Profession from the common Imputation of Atheism and Prophaneness.

§ 17.

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§ 17. *Men of Wealth and Authority, and that have many Dependants, have excellent Advantages for this Duty.* O what a World of Good might Lords and Gentlemen do, if they had but Hearts to improve their Influence over others! Have you not all your Honour and Riches from God? Doth not Christ say, *unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required?* If you speak to your Dependants for God and their Souls, you may be regarded, when even a Minister shall be despised. As you value the Honour of God, your own Comfort, and the Salvation of Souls, improve your Influence over Tenants and Neighbours; visit their Houses; see whether they worship God in their Families; and take all Opportunities to press them to their Duty. Despise them not. Remember God is no Respecter of Persons. Let Men see that you excel others in Piety, Compassion, and Diligence in God's Work, as you do in the Riches and Honours of the World. I confess you will by this Means be singular, but then you will be singular in Glory; for few of the *Mighty and Noble are called.*

§ 18. *As for the Ministers of the Gospel, it is the very Work of their Calling, to help others to Heaven.* ——Be sure to *make it the main End of your Studies and Preaching.* He is the able, skilful Minister, that is best skilled in the Art of instructing, convincing, persuading, and consequently of winning Souls; and that is the best Sermon that is best in these. When you seek not God, but yourselves, God will make you the most contemptible of Men. It is true of your Reputation, what Christ says of your Life, *He that loveth it, shall lose it.* Let the Vigour of your Persuasions shew, that you are sensible on how weighty a Business you are sent. Preach with that Seriousness and Fervour, as Men that believe their own

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own Doctrine, and that know their Hearers must be prevailed with, or be damned.——*Think not that all your Work is in your Studies and Pulpit.* You are *Shepherds*, and must know every Sheep, and what is their Disease, and mark their Strayings, and help to cure them and fetch them home. Learn of *Paul*, not only to *teach your People publickly*, but *from House to House.* Enquire how they grow in Knowledge and Holiness, and on what Grounds they build their Hopes of Salvation, and whether they walk uprightly, and perform the Duties of their several Relations. See whether they worship God in their Families, and teach them how to do it. Be familiar with them, that you may maintain your Interest in them, and improve it all for God. Know of them how they profit by publick Teaching. If any too little *savour the Things of the Spirit*, let them be pitied, but not neglected. If any *walk disorderly*, recover them with Diligence and Patience. If they be ignorant, it may be your Fault, as much as theirs. Be not asleep while the Wolf is waking.——*Deal not slightly with any.* Some will not tell their People plainly of their Sins, because they are great Men; and some, because they are godly; as if none but the Poor and the Wicked should be dealt plainly with. ——Yet *labour to be skilful and discreet*, that the *Manner* may answer to the Excellency of the *Matter.* Every reasonable Soul hath both *Judgment* and *Affection*; and every rational, spiritual Sermon, must have both. Study and pray, and pray and study, till you are become *Workmen that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth*; that your People may not be ashamed, nor weary in hearing you.——*Let your Conversation be teaching, as well as your Doctrine.* Be as forward in a holy and heavenly Life, as you are in pressing others to it. Let your Discourse be edifying and

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and ſpiritual. Suffer any Thing, rather than the Goſpel and Men's Souls ſhould ſuffer. Let Men ſee that you uſe not the Miniſtry only for a Trade to live by; but that your Hearts are ſet upon the Welfare of Souls. Whatſoever Meekneſs, Humility, Condeſcention, or Self-denial you teach them from the Goſpel, teach it them alſo by your undiſſembled Example.——*Study and ſtrive after Unity and Peace.* If ever you would promote the Kingdom of Chriſt, and your People's Salvation, do it in a Way of Peace and Love. It is as hard a Thing to maintain in your People a ſound Underſtanding, a tender Conſcience, a lively, gracious, heavenly Frame of Spirit, and an upright Life, amidſt Contention, as to keep your Candle lighted in the greateſt Storms. *Bleſſed is that Servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, ſhall find ſo doing.*

§. 19. *All you whom God hath intruſted with the Care of Children or Servants,* I would alſo perſuade to this great Work of helping others to the heavenly Reſt. ——*Conſider, what plain and preſſing Commands of God require this at your Hands. Theſe Words thou ſhalt teach diligently unto thy Children, and ſhalt talk of them when thou ſitteſt in thine Houſe, and when thou walkeſt by the Way, and when thou lieſt down, and when thou riſeſt up* (i). *Train up a Child in the Way he ſhould go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it* (k). *Bring up your Children in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord* (l). *Joſhua* reſolved, that *he and his Houſe would ſerve the Lord* (m). And God himſelf ſays of *Abraham, I know him, that he will command his Children, and his Houſhold after him, and they ſhall keep the Way of the Lord* (n).——*Conſider, it is a Duty you owe your Children in Point of Juſtice.* From you they received

(i) Deut. vi. 6, 7. (k) Prov. xxii. 6. (l) Epheſ. vi. 4.
(m) Joſh. xxiv. 15. (n) Gen. xviii. 19.

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received the Defilement and Misery of their Natures; and therefore you owe them all possible Help for their Recovery.——*Consider, how near your Children are to you.* They are Parts of yourselves. If they prosper when you are dead, you take it as if you lived and prospered in them; and should you not be of the same Mind for their everlasting Rest?——*Otherwise you will be Witnesses against your own Souls.* Your Care, and Pains, and Cost for their Bodies, will condemn you for your Neglect of their precious Souls.——*Yea, all the brute Creatures may condemn you.* Which of them is not tender of their Young?——*Consider, God hath made your Children your Charge, and your Servants too.* Every one will confess they are the Minister's Charge. And have not you a greater Charge of your own Families, than any Minister can have of them? Doubtless at your Hands God will require the Blood of their Souls. It is the greatest Charge you were ever intrusted with, and woe to you, if you suffer them to be ignorant or wicked for Want of your Instruction or Correction.——*Consider, what Work there is for you in their Dispositions and Lives.* There is not one Sin, but thousands. They are hereditary Diseases, bred in their Natures. The Things you must teach them are contrary to the Interest and Desires of their Flesh. May the Lord make you sensible what a Work and Charge lieth upon you!——*Consider, what Sorrows you prepare for yourselves by the Neglect of your Children.* If they prove Thorns in your Eyes, they are of your own planting. If you should repent and be saved, is it nothing to think of their Damnation; and yourselves the Occasions of it? But if you die in your Sin, how will they cry out against you in Hell! "All this was long of you; "you should have taught us better, and did not; "you should have restrained us from Sin, and cor-

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"rected us, but did not." What an Addition will such Out-cries be to your Misery?——On the other Side, *think what a Comfort you may have, if you be faithful in this Duty.* If you should not succeed, you have freed your own Souls, and have Peace in your own Consciences. If you do, the Comfort is inexpressible, in their Love and Obedience, their supplying your Wants, and delighting you in all your remaining Path to Glory. Yea, all your Family may fare the better for one pious Child or Servant. But the greatest Joy will be, when you shall say, *Lord, here am I, and the Children thou hast given me*; and shall joyfully live with them for ever.——*Consider, how much the Welfare of Church and State depends on this Duty.* Good Laws will not reform us, if Reformation begin not at Home. This is the Cause of all our Miseries in Church and State, even the Want of a holy Education of Children.——*I also intreat Parents to consider, what excellent Advantages they have for saving their Children.* They are with you while they are tender and flexible. You have a Twig to bend, not an Oak. None in the World have such Interest in their Affections as you have. You have also the greatest Authority over them. Their whole Dependance is upon you for a Maintenance. You best know their Temper and Inclinations. And you are ever with them, and can never want Opportunities: Especially you *Mothers*, remember this, who are more with your Children while young, than their Fathers. What Pains are you at for their Bodies? What do you suffer to bring them into the World? And will you not be at as much Pains for the saving of their Souls? Your Affections are tender; and will it not move you to think of their perishing for ever? I beseech you, for the Sake of the Children of your Bowels, teach them, admonish them, watch over them,

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them, and give them no Rest till you have brought them to Christ.

§ 20. *I shall conclude with this earnest Request to all Christian Parents that read these Lines; that they would have Compassion on the Souls of their poor Children, and be faithful to the great Trust that God hath put on them.* If you cannot do what you would for them, yet do what you can. Both Church and State, City and Country, groan under the Neglect of this weighty Duty. Your Children know not God, nor his Laws, but *take his Name in vain*, and slight his Worship, and you neither instruct, nor correct them; and therefore God corrects both them and you. You are so tender of them, that God is the less tender both of them and you. Wonder not if God make you smart for your Children's Sins; for you are guilty of all they commit, by your Neglect of your Duty to reform them. Will you resolve therefore to set upon this Duty, and neglect it no longer? Remember *Eli*. Your Children are like *Moses* in the Bulrushes, ready to perish if they have not Help. As ever you would not be charged before God as Murderers of their Souls, nor have them cry out against you in everlasting Fire, see that you teach them how to escape it, and bring them up in Holiness, and the Fear of God. I charge every one of you, upon your Allegiance to God, as you will very shortly answer the contrary at your Peril, that you will neither refuse nor neglect this most necessary Duty. If you are not willing to do it, now you know it to be so great a Duty, you are Rebels, and no true Subjects of Jesus Christ. If you are willing, but know not how, I will add a few Words of Direction to help you. *Lead them, by your own Examples, to Prayer, Reading, and other religious Duties. Inform their Understandings. Store their Memories. Rectify their Wills. Quicken*

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their Affections. Keep tender their Consciences. Restrain their Tongues, and teach them gracious Speech. Reform and watch over their outward Conversation. To these Ends, *get them Bibles and pious Books, and see that they read them Examine them often what they learn: Especially spend the Lord's Day in this Work, and suffer them not to spend it in Sports or Idleness. Shew them the Meaning of what they read or learn. Keep them out of evil Company, and acquaint them with the Godly. And fail not to make them learn their Catechism. Especially shew them the Necessity, Excellency, and Pleasure of serving God; and labour to fix all upon their Hearts.*

CHAP.

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CHAP. X.

The Saint's Rest is not to be expected on Earth.

§ 1. *In order to shew the Sin and Folly of expecting Rest here,* § 2. (I) *the Reasonableness of present Afflictions is considered;* § 3. (1) *that they are the Way to Rest,* § 4. (2) *keep us from mistaking our Rest,* § 5. (3) *from losing our Way to it,* § 6. (4) *quicken our Pace towards it,* § 7. (5) *chiefly incommode our Flesh,* § 8, 9. *and* (6) *under them the sweetest Foretastes of Rest are often enjoyed:* § 10. (II) *How unreasonable to rest in present Enjoyments;* § 11. (1) *that 'tis Idolatry;* § 12. (2) *that it contradicts God's End in giving them;* § 13. (3) *is the Way to have them refused, withdrawn, or imbittered;* § 14. (4) *that to be suffered to take up our Rest here is the greatest Curse;* § 15. (5) *that 'tis seeking Rest where it is not;* § 16. (6) *that the Creatures, without God, would aggravate our Misery;* § 17 (7) *and all this is confirmed by Experience.* § 18. *The Author laments that this is nevertheless a most common Sin.* § 19—23. (III) *How unreasonable our Unwillingness to die, and possess the Saint's Rest, is largely considered.* § 24. *The Author apologizes for saying so much on this last Head.*

§ 1. WE are not yet come to our *resting Place.* Doth it *remain?* How great then is our Sin and Folly to seek and expect it here? Where shall we find the *Christian* that deserves not this Reproof?

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proof? We would all have continual Prosperity, because it is easy and pleasing to the Flesh; but we consider not the Unreasonableness of such Desires. And when we enjoy convenient Houses, Goods, Lands and Revenues; or the necessary Means God hath appointed for our spiritual Good; we seek Rest in these Enjoyments. Whether we are in an afflicted, or prosperous State, it is apparent, we exceedingly make the Creature our Rest. Do we not desire Creature-Enjoyments more violently, when we want them, than we desire God himself? Do we not delight more in the Possession of them, than in the Enjoyment of God? And if we lose them, doth it not trouble us more than our Loss of God? Is it not enough, that they are refreshing Helps in our Way to Heaven, but they must also be made our Heaven itself? *Christian Reader*, I would as willingly make thee sensible of this Sin, as of any Sin in the World, if I could tell how to do it; for the Lord's greatest Quarrel with us is in this Point. In order to this, I most earnestly beseech thee to consider,——*the Reasonableness of present Afflictions*,——and *the Unreasonableness of resting in present Enjoyments*;——*as also of our Unwillingness to die, that we may possess eternal Rest.*

§ 2. (1) To shew *the Reasonableness of present Afflictions*, consider,——they are *the Way to Rest*;——they *keep us from mistaking our Rest*,——*and from losing our Way to it*;——they *quicken our Pace towards it*;——they *chiefly incommode our Flesh*;——and *under them God's People have often the sweetest Fore-tastes of their Rest.*

§ 3. (1) *Consider, that Labour and Trouble are the common Way to Rest*, both in the Course of Nature and Grace. Can there possibly be Rest without Weariness? Do you not travel and toil first, and rest after?

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after? The Day for Labour is first, and then follows the Night for Rest. Why should we desire the Course of Grace to be perverted, any more than the Course of Nature? It is an established Decree, *that we must through much Tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God* (a). And that *if we suffer, we shall also reign with Christ* (b). And what are we, that God's Statutes should be reversed for our Pleasure?

§ 4. (2) *Afflictions are exceeding useful to us, to keep us from mistaking our Rest.* A Christian's Motion towards Heaven is voluntary, and not constrained. Those Means therefore are most profitable, which help his Understanding and Will. The most dangerous Mistake of our Souls is, to take the Creature for God, and Earth for Heaven. What warm, affectionate, eager Thoughts have we of the World, till Afflictions cool and moderate them? Afflictions speak convincingly, and will be heard when Preachers cannot. Many a poor Christian is sometime bending his Thoughts to Wealth, or Flesh-pleasing, or Applause; and so loses his Relish of Christ, and the Joys above; till God break in upon his Riches, or Children, or Conscience, or Health, and break down his Mountain which he thought so strong: And then, when he lieth in *Manasseh*'s Fetters, or is fastened to his Bed with pining Sickness, the World is nothing, and Heaven is something. If our dear Lord did not put these Thorns under our Head, we should sleep out our Lives, and lose our Glory.

§ 5. (3) *Afflictions are also God's most effectual Means to keep us from losing our Way to our Rest.* Without this Hedge of Thorns, on the right Hand, and left, we should hardly keep the Way to Heaven. If there be but one Gap open, how ready are we to find it, and turn out at it? When we grow wanton, or worldly,

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(a) Acts xiv. 22. (b) 2 Tim. ii. 12.

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worldly, or proud, how doth Sickneſs, or other Affliction, reduce us? Every *Chriſtian*, as well as *Luther*, may call Affliction one of his beſt School-maſters; and with *David* may ſay, *Before I was afflicted, I went aſtray; but now have I kept thy Word* (c). Many thouſand recovered Sinners may cry, "O "healthful Sickneſs! O comfortable Sorrows! O "gainful Loſſes! O enriching Poverty! O bleſſed "Day that ever I was afflicted!" Not only the *green Paſtures*, and *ſtill Waters*, but *the Rod and Staff, they comfort us.* Though the Word and Spirit do the main Work, yet Suffering ſo unbolts the Door of the Heart, that the Word hath eaſier Entrance.

§ 6. (4) *Afflictions likewiſe ſerve to quicken our Pace in the Way to our Reſt.* It were well if mere Love would prevail with us, and that we were rather drawn to Heaven, than driven. But ſeeing our Hearts are ſo bad, that Mercy will not do it; it is better be put on with the ſharpeſt Scourge, than loiter, like *the fooliſh Virgins*, till *the Door is ſhut.* O what Difference is there, betwixt our Prayers in Health, and in Sickneſs; betwixt our Repentings in Proſperity and Adverſity! Alas! if we did not ſometime feel the Spur, what a ſlow Pace would moſt of us hold toward Heaven? Since our vile Natures require it, why ſhould we be unwilling that God ſhould do us Good by ſharp Means? Judge, *Chriſtian*, whether thou doſt not go more watchfully and ſpeedily in the Way to Heaven, in thy Sufferings, than in thy more pleaſing and proſperous State.

§ 7. (5) *Conſider further, it is but the Fleſh that is chiefly troubled and grieved by Affliction.* In moſt of our Sufferings the Soul is free, unleſs we ourſelves wilfully afflict it. "Why then, O my Soul, doſt thou ſide "with this Fleſh, and complain, as it complaineth? It

(c) Pſalm cxix. 67.

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"It should be thy Work to *keep it under, and bring "it into Subjection*; and if God do it for thee, shouldst "thou be discontented? Hath not the pleasing of it "been the Cause of almost all thy spiritual Sorrows? "Why then may not the displeasing of it further thy "Joys? Must not *Paul and Silas sing*, because *their "Feet are in the Stocks?* Their Spirits were not im-"prisoned. Ah, unworthy Soul! is this thy Thanks "to God for preferring thee so far before thy Body? "When it is rotting in the Grave, thou shalt be a "Companion of the perfected Spirits of the Just. In "the mean Time, hast thou not Consolation which "the Flesh knows not of? Murmur not then at "God's Dealings with thy Body; if it were for Want "of Love to thee, he would not have dealt so by all "his Saints. Never expect thy Flesh should truly "expound the Meaning of the Rod. It will call "Love, Hatred; and say, God is destroying, when "he is saving. It is the suffering Party, and there-"fore not fit to be the Judge." Could we once believe God, and judge of his Dealings by his Word, and by their Usefulness to our Souls, and Reference to our Rest, and could we stop our Ears against all the Clamours of the Flesh, then we should have a truer Judgment of our Afflictions.

§ 8. (6) Once more *consider, God seldom gives his People so sweet a Fore-taste of their future Rest, as in their deep Afflictions.* He keeps his most precious Cordials for the Time of our greatest Faintings and Dangers. He gives them, when He knows they are needed, and will be valued; and when He is sure to be thanked for them, and his People rejoiced by them. Especially when our Sufferings are more directly for his Cause, then He seldom fails to sweeten the bitter Cup. The *Martyrs* have possessed the highest Joys. When did Christ preach such Comforts to his Disci-

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ples, as when *their Hearts were sorrowful* at his Departure? When did He appear among them, and say, *Peace be unto you*, but when they were shut up for fear of the *Jews?* When did *Stephen see Heaven opened*, but when he was giving up his Life for the Testimony of Jesus? Is not that our best State, wherein we have most of God? Why else do we desire to come to Heaven? If we look for a Heaven of fleshly Delights, we shall find ourselves mistaken. Conclude then, that Affliction is not so bad a State for a Saint in his Way to Rest. Are we wiser than God? Doth He not know what is good for us as well as we? or is He not as careful of our Good, as we of our own? Woe to us, if He were not much more so! and if He did not love us better, than we love either Him, or ourselves!

§ 9. Say not, "I could bear any other Affliction "but this." If God had afflicted thee where thou canst bear it, thy Idol would neither have been discovered, nor removed. Neither say, "If God would "deliver me out of it, I could be content to bear it." Is it nothing that He hath promised it *shall work for thy Good?* Is it not enough that thou art sure to be delivered at Death? Nor let it be said, "If my "Affliction did not disable me for Duty, I could "bear it." It doth not disable thee for that Duty which tendeth to thy own personal Benefit, but is the greatest quickening Help thou canst expect. As for thy Duty to others, it is not thy Duty when God disables thee. Perhaps thou wilt say, "The Godly "are my Afflictors; if it were ungodly Men, I could "easily bear it." Whoever is the Instrument, the Affliction is from God, and the deserving Cause thyself; and is it not better to look more to God and thyself? Didst thou not know that the best Men are still sinful in Part? Don't plead, "If I had but that "Con-

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" Consolation, which you say God reserveth for " suffering Times, I should suffer more contentedly; " but I do not perceive any such Thing." The more you suffer for Righteousness-Sake, the more of this Blessing you may expect; and the more you suffer for your own evil Doing, the longer it will be before that Sweetness comes. Are not the Comforts you desire, neglected or resisted? Have your Afflictions wrought kindly with you, and fitted you for Comfort? It is not mere Suffering that prepares you for Comfort, but the Success and Fruit of Sufferings upon your Hearts.

§ 10. (11) *To shew the Unreasonableness of resting in present Enjoyments*, consider,——*it is idolizing them*; ——*it contradicts God's End in giving them*;——*it is the Way to have them refused, withdrawn, or imbittered*; ——*to be suffered to take up our Rest here, is the greatest Curse*;——*it is seeking Rest where it is not to be found*; ——*the Creatures, without God, would aggravate our Misery*;——*and to confirm all this, we may consult our own and others Experience*.

§ 11. (1) *It is gross Idolatry to make any Creature, or Means, our Rest.* To be the Rest of the Soul, is God's own Prerogative. As it is apparent Idolatry to place our Rest in Riches, or Honours; so it is but a more refined Idolatry to take up our Rest in excellent Means of Grace. How ill must our dear Lord take it, when we give him Cause to complain, as he did of our Fellow-Idolaters, *My People have been lost Sheep, they have forgotten their resting Place* (d)? And to say, " My People can find Rest in any Thing, ra- " ther than in me. They can delight in one another, " but not in me. They can rejoice in my Creatures " and Ordinances, but not in me. Yea, in their " very Labours and Duties they seek for Rest, but

(d) Jer. l. 6.

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" not in me. They had rather be any where, than " be with me. Are these their Gods? Have these " redeemed them? Will these be better to them, " than I have been, or than I would be?" If yourselves have a Wife, a Husband, a Son, that had rather be any where than in your Company, and be never so merry as when furthest from you, would you not take it ill? So must our God needs do.

§ 12. (2) *You contradict the End of God in giving these Enjoyments.* He gave them to help thee to him, and dost thou take up with them in his stead? He gave them to be Refreshments in thy Journey, and wouldst thou dwell in thy Inn, and go no further? It may be said of all our Comforts and Ordinances, as it is said of the *Israelites*, *The Ark of the Covenant of the Lord went before them, to search out a resting Place for them* (e). So do all God's Mercies here. They are not that Rest; as *John* professed *he was not the Christ*; but they are *Voices crying in* this *Wilderness*, to bid us *prepare, for the Kingdom of God*, our true Rest, *is at Hand*. Therefore to rest here, were to turn all Mercies contrary to their own Ends, and to our own Advantages, and to destroy ourselves with that which should help us.

§ 13. (3) *It is the Way to cause God, either to deny the Mercies we ask, or take from us those we enjoy, or at least imbitter them to us.* God is no where so jealous as here. If you had a Servant, whom your Wife loved better than yourself, would you not take it ill of such a Wife, and rid your House of such a Servant? So, if the Lord see you begin to settle in the World, and say, " Here I will rest;" no Wonder if He soon in his Jealousy unsettle you. If He love you, no Wonder if he take that from you, with which He sees

(e) Numb. x. 33.

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sees you are destroying yourselves. It hath been my long Observation of many, that when they have attempted great Works, and have just finished them; or have aimed at great Things in the World, and have just obtained them; or have lived in much Trouble, and have just overcome it; and begin to look on their Condition with Content, and rest in it; they are then usually near to Death or Ruin. When a Man is once at this Language, *Soul, take thy Ease*; the next News usually is, *Thou Fool, this Night*, or this Month, or this Year, *thy Soul shall be required, and then whose shall these Things be?* What House is there, where this Fool dwelleth not? Let you and I consider, whether it be not our own Case. Many a Servant of God hath been destroyed from the Earth, by being over-valued, and over-loved. I am perswaded, our Discontents and Murmurings are not so provoking to God, nor so destructive to the Sinner, as our too sweet enjoying, and resting in, a pleasing State. If God hath crossed you in Wife, Children, Goods, Friends, either by taking them away, or the Comfort of them; try whether this be not the Cause: For whereseever your Desires stop, and you say, "Now I am well;" that Condition you make your God, and engage the Jealousy of God against it. Whether you be Friends to God or Enemies, you can never expect that God should suffer you quietly to enjoy your Idol.

§ 14. (4) *Should God suffer you to take up your Rest here, it is one of the greatest Curses that could befal you.* It were better never to have a Day of Ease in the World; for then Weariness might make you seek after the true Rest. But if you are suffered to sit down and rest here, a restless Wretch you will be thro' all Eternity. To *have their Portion in this Life*, is the Lot of the most miserable perishing Sinners.

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Doth it become *Christians* then to expect so much here? Our Rest is our Heaven; and where we take our Rest, there we make our Heaven. And wouldst thou have but such a Heaven as this?

§ 15. (5) *It is seeking Rest where it is not to be found.* Your Labour will be lost, and, if you proceed, your Soul's eternal Rest too.——*Our Rest is only in the full obtaining of our ultimate End.* But that is not to be expected in this Life; neither is Rest therefore to be expected here. Is God to be enjoyed in the best Church here, as he is in Heaven? How little of God the Saints enjoy under the best Means, let their own Complainings testify. Poor Comforters are the best Ordinances, without God. Should a Traveller take up his Rest in the Way? No, because his Home is his Journey's End. When you have all that Creatures and Means can afford, have you that you believed, prayed, suffered for? I think you dare not say so. We are like little Children strayed from Home, and God is now fetching us Home, and we are ready to turn into any House, stay and play with every Thing in our Way, and sit down on every green Bank, and much ado there is to get us Home.——*We are also in the Midst of our Labours and Dangers*; and is there any resting here? What painful Work doth lie upon our Hands? Look to our Brethren, to our Souls, and to God; and what a deal of Work, in respect of each of these, doth lie before us? And can we rest in the Midst of all our Labours? Indeed we may rest on Earth, as *the Ark* is said to have *rested in the Midst of Jordan*; a short and small Rest. Or as *Abraham* desired the *Angels to turn in, and rest themselves* in his Tent, where they would have been loth to have taken up their Dwelling. Should *Israel* have fixed their Rest in the Wilderness, among Serpents, and Enemies, and

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Weariness, and Famine? Should *Noah* have made the *Ark* his Home, and have been loth to come forth when *the Waters were assuaged?* Should the Mariner chuse his Dwelling on the Sea, and settle his Rest in the Midst of Rocks, and Sands, and raging Tempests? Should a Soldier rest in the thickest of his Enemies? And are not *Christians* such Travellers, such Mariners, such Soldiers? Have you not Fears within, and Troubles without? Are we not in continual Dangers? We cannot eat, drink, sleep, labour, pray, hear, converse, but in the Midst of Snares; and shall we sit down and rest here? O *Christian*, follow thy Work, look to thy Dangers, hold on to the End, win the Field, and come off the Ground, before thou think of a settled Rest. Whenever thou talkest of Rest on Earth, it is like *Peter on the Mount*, thou *knowest not what thou sayest.* If, instead of telling the converted *Thief*, *this Day shalt thou be with me in Paradise*, Christ had said, he should rest there on the Cross; would he not have took it for a Derision? Methinks it should be ill resting in the Midst of Sickness and Pains, Persecutions and Distresses. But if nothing else will convince us, yet sure the Remainders of Sin, which do so easily beset us, should quickly satisfy a Believer, that here is not his Rest. I say therefore to every one that thinketh of Rest on Earth, *Arise ye, and depart, for this is not your Rest, because it is polluted* (f).——*These Things cannot in their Nature be a true Christian's Rest.* They are too poor, to make us rich; too low, to raise us to Happiness; too empty, to fill our Souls; and of too short Continuance to be our eternal Content. If Prosperity, or whatsoever we here desire, be too base to make Gods of, they are too base to be our Rest.——*The Soul's Rest must be sufficient to afford it perpetual Satisfaction.*

(f) Micah ii. 10.

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faction. But the Content which Creatures afford wax old, and abate after a short Enjoyment. If God should rain down *Angel's Food*, we should soon *loath the Manna.* If Novelty support not, our Delights on Earth grow dull. All Creatures are to us, as the Flowers to the Bee; there is but little Honey on any one, and therefore there must be a superficial Taste, and so to the next.——*The more the Creature is known, the less it satisfieth.* Those only are taken with it, who see no further than its outward Beauty, without discerning its inward Vanity. When we thoroughly know the Condition of other Men, and have discovered the Evil as well as the Good, and the Defects as well as the Perfections, we then cease our Admiration.

§ 16. (6) *To have Creatures and Means without God, is an Aggravation of our Misery.* If God should say, "Take my Creatures, my Word, my Servants, my "Ordinances, but not myself;" would you take this for Happiness? If you had the Word of God, and not *the Word*, which *is God*; or the Bread of the Lord, and not the Lord, which *is the true Bread*; or could cry with the *Jews*, *the Temple of the Lord*, and had not the Lord of the Temple; this were a poor Happiness. Was *Capernaum* the more happy, or the more miserable, for *seeing the mighty Works which they had seen, and hearing the Words of Christ which they did hear?* Surely that, which aggravates our Sin and Misery, cannot be our Rest.

§ 17. (7) *To confirm all this, let us consult our own and others Experience.*——Millions have made Trial, but did any ever find a sufficient Rest for his Soul on Earth? Delights I deny not but they have found, but Rest and Satisfaction they never found. And shall we think to find that which never Man could find before us? *Ahab's Kingdom* is nothing to him, without

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without *Naboth's Vineyard*; and did that satisfy him when he obtained it? Were you, like *Noah's Dove*, to look through the Earth for a resting Place, you would return confessing, that you can find none. Go, ask *Honour*, is there Rest here? You may as well rest on the Top of tempestuous Mountains, or in *Ætna*'s Flames. Ask *Riches*, is there Rest here? Even such as is in a Bed of Thorns. If you enquire for Rest of *worldly Pleasure*; it is such as the Fish hath in swallowing the Bait; when the Pleasure is sweetest, Death is nearest. Go to *Learning*, and even to *divine Ordinances*, and enquire whether there your Souls may rest? You might indeed receive from these an Olive-Branch of Hope, as they are Means to your Rest, and have Relation to Eternity; but in Regard of any Satisfaction in themselves, you would remain as restless as ever. How well might all these answer us, as *Jacob* did *Rachel*, *Am I in God's stead*, that you come to me for Soul-Rest? Not all the States of Men in the World; neither Court nor Country, Towns or Cities, Shops or Fields, Treasuries, Libraries, Solitude, Society, Studies, or Pulpits, can afford any such Thing as this Rest. If you could enquire of the *Dead* of all Generations, or of the *Living* through all Dominions, they would all tell you, "Here is no Rest."——Or if other Men's Experiences move you not, take a View of your own. Can you remember the State that did fully satisfy you? or if you could, will it prove lasting? I believe we may all say of our earthly Rest, as *Paul* of our Hope, *If it were in this Life only, we are of all Men most miserable.*

§ 18. If then either Scripture, or Reason, or the Experience of ourselves, and all the World, will satisfy us, we may see there is no resting here. And yet how guilty are the Generality of us of this Sin?

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How many Halts and Stops do we make, before we will make the Lord our Rest? How must God even drive us, and fire us out of every Condition, lest we should sit down and rest there? If He give us Prosperity, Riches, or Honour, we do in our Hearts dance before them, as the *Israelites* before their *Calf*, and say, *These are thy Gods*, and conclude, *it is good to be here.* If He imbitter all these to us, how restless are we till our Condition be sweetened, that we may sit down again, and rest where we were? If He proceed in the Cure, and take the Creature quite away, then how do we labour, and cry, and pray, that God would restore it, that we may make it our Rest again? And while we are deprived of our former Idol, yet rather than come to God, we delight ourselves in the Hope of recovering it, and make that very Hope our Rest; or search about from Creature to Creature, to find out something to supply the Room; yea, if we can find no Supply, yet we will rather settle in this Misery, and make a Rest of a wretched Being, than leave all and come to God. O the cursed Averseness of our Souls from God! If any Place in Hell were tolerable, the Soul would rather take up its Rest there, than come to God. Yea, when He is bringing us over to Him, and hath convinced us of the Worth of His Ways and Service, the last Deceit of all is here, we will rather settle upon those Ways that lead to Him, and those Ordinances that speak of Him, and those Gifts which flow from Him, than we will come entirely over to Himself *Christian*, marvel not that I speak so much of resting in these; beware lest it prove thy own Case. I suppose thou art so far convinced of the Vanity of Riches, Honour, and Pleasure, that thou canst more easily disclaim these, and it is well if it be so; but the *Means of Grace* thou lookest on with less Suspicion, and thinkest thou canst not

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not delight in them too much, especially seeing most of the World despise them, or delight in them too little. I know they must be loved and valued, and he that delighteth in any worldly Thing more than in them, is not a *Christian.* But when we are content with Ordinances without God, and had rather be at a Sermon than in Heaven, and a Member of the Church here, than of the perfect Church above, this is a sad Mistake. So far let thy Soul take Comfort in Ordinances, as God doth accompany them; remembering, this is not Heaven, but the First-Fruits. *While we are present in the Body, we are absent from the Lord*; and while we are absent from Him, we are absent from our Rest. If God were as willing to be absent from us, as we from Him, and as loth to be our Rest, as we to rest in Him, we should be left to an eternal restless Separation. In a Word, as you are sensible of the Sinfulness of your earthly Discontents, so be you also of your irregular Satisfactions, and pray God to pardon them much more. And above all the Plagues on this Side Hell, see that you *watch and pray against settling any where short of Heaven, or reposing your Souls on any Thing below God.*

§ 19. (III) *The next Thing to be considered is, our unreasonable Unwillingness to die that we may possess the Saint's Rest.* We linger, like *Lot* in *Sodom*, till *the Lord, being merciful unto us*, doth pluck us away against our Wills. I confess that Death of itself is not desirable; but the Soul's Rest with God is, to which Death is the common Passage. Because we are apt to make light of this Sin, let me set before you its Nature and Remedy in a Variety of Considerations. As for Instance.——*It has in it much Infidelity.* If we did but verily believe, that the Promise of this Glory is the Word of God, and that God doth

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doth truly mean as He speaks, and is fully resolved to make it good; if we did verily believe, that there is indeed such Blessedness prepared for Believers; surely we should be as impatient of living, as we are now fearful of dying, and should think every Day a Year till our last Day should come. Is it possible that we can truly believe, that Death will remove us from Misery to such Glory, and yet be loth to die? If the Doubts of our own Interest in that Glory make us fear, yet a true Belief of the Certainty and Excellency of this Rest would make us restless till our Title to it be cleared. Though there is much *Faith* and *Christianity* in our Mouths, yet there is much *Infidelity* and *Paganism* in our Hearts, which is the chief Cause that we are so loth to die.——*It is also much owing to the Coldness of our Love.* If we love our Friend, we love his Company, his Presence is comfortable, his Absence is painful; when he comes to us, we entertain him with Gladness; when he dies, we mourn, and usually over-mourn. To be separated from a faithful Friend, is like the rending a Member from our Body. And would not our Desires after God be such, if we really loved Him? Nay, should it not be much more than such, as He is above all Friends most lovely? May the Lord teach us to look closely to our Hearts, and take Heed of Self-Deceit in this Point! Whatever we pretend, if we love either *Father*, *Mother*, Husband, *Wife*, *Child*, Friend, Wealth, or *Life* itself more than Christ, we are yet *none of his* sincere *Disciples*. When it comes to the Trial, the Question will not be, who hath preached most, or heard most, or talked most; but, who hath loved most? Christ will not take Sermons, Prayers, Fastings, no, nor the *giving our Goods*, nor the *burning our Bodies*, instead of Love. And do we love him, and yet care not how long we are from him? Was it

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such a Joy to *Jacob* to see the Face of *Joseph* in *Egypt?* and shall we be contented without the Sight of Christ in Glory, and yet say we love him? I dare not conclude, that we have no Love at all, when we are so loth to die; but I dare say, were our Love more, we should die more willingly. If this holy Flame were thoroughly kindled in our Breasts, we should cry out with *David*, *As the Hart panteth after the Water-Brooks, so panteth my Soul after thee, O God. My Soul thirsteth for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God?*——*By our Unwillingness to die, it appears we are little weary of Sin.* Did we take Sin for the greatest Evil, we should not be willing to have its Company so long. " O foolish sinful Heart! " Hast thou been so long *a Cage of all unclean* Lusts, " a Fountain incessantly streaming forth the bitter " Waters of Transgression, and art thou not yet " weary? Wretched Soul! Hast thou been so long " wounded in all thy Faculties, so grievously lan- " guishing in all thy Performances, so fruitful a Soil " of all Iniquities, and art thou not yet more weary? " Wouldst thou still lie under thy Imperfections? " Hath thy Sin proved so profitable a Commodity, " so necessary a Companion, such a delightful Em- " ployment, that thou dost so much dread the part- " ing Day? May not God justly grant thee thy " Wishes, and seal thee a Lease of thy desired Dis- " tance from Him, and *nail thy Ears to these Doors* of " Misery, and exclude thee eternally from His " Glory?"——*It shews that we are insensible of the Vanity of the Creature, when we are so loth to hear or think of a Removal.* " Ah foolish wretched Soul! " Doth every Prisoner groan for Freedom? and every " Slave desire his Jubilee? and every sick Man long " for Health? and every hungry Man for Food? and " dost thou alone abhor Deliverance? Doth the Sailor

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" wish to see the Land? Doth the Husbandman desire " the Harvest, and the Labourer to receive his Pay? " Doth the Traveller long to be at Home, and the " Racer to win the Prize, and the Soldier to win the " Field? And art thou loth to see thy Labours " finished, and to receive the End of thy Faith and " Sufferings? Have thy Griefs been only Dreams? " If they were, yet methinks thou shouldst not be " afraid of waking. Or is it not rather the World's " Delights that are all mere Dreams and Shadows? " Or is the World become of late more kind? We " may, at our Peril, reconcile ourselves to the World, " but it will never reconcile itself to us. O unworthy " Soul! who hadst rather dwell in this Land of Dark- " ness, and wander in this barren Wilderness, than " be at Rest with Jesus Christ! who hadst rather stay " among the Wolves, and daily suffer the Scorpion's " Stings, than praise the Lord with the Host of " Heaven!"

§ 20. This Unwillingness to die, *doth actually impeach us of High Treason against the Lord.* Is it not a chusing of Earth before Him, and taking present Things for our Happiness, and consequently making them our very God? If we did indeed make God our End, our Rest, our Portion, our Treasure, how is it possible but we should desire to enjoy him?——*It moreover discovers some Dissimulation.* Would you have any Man believe you, when you call the Lord your only Hope, and speak of Christ as All in All, and of the Joy that is in his Presence, and yet would endure the hardest Life, rather than die, and enter into his Presence? What Self Contradiction is this, to talk so hardly of the World, and the Flesh, to groan and complain of Sin and Suffering; and yet fear no Day more than that, which we expect should bring our final Freedom? What Hypocrisy is this, to profess to

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ſtrive and fight for Heaven, which we are loth to come to; and ſpend one Hour after another in Prayer, for that which we would not have?——*Hereby we wrong the Lord and his Promiſes, and diſgrace his Ways in the Eyes of the World.* As if we would perſuade them to queſtion, whether God be true to his Word or no? Whether there be any ſuch Glory as the Scripture mentions? When they ſee thoſe ſo loth to leave their Hold of preſent Things, who have profeſſed to live by Faith, and have boaſted of their Hopes in another World, and ſpoken diſgracefully of all Things below in Compariſon of Things above; how doth this confirm the World in their Unbelief and Senſuality? "Sure," ſay they, "if theſe Profeſſors did expect ſo "much Glory, and make ſo light of the World as "they ſeem, they would not themſelves be ſo loth to "change." O how are we ever able to repair the Wrong which we do to God and Souls by this Scandal? And what an Honour to God, what a Strengthening to Believers, what a Conviction to Unbelievers, would it be, if Chriſtians in this did anſwer their Profeſſions, and chearfully welcome the News of Reſt? ——*It alſo evidently ſhows, that we have ſpent much Time to little Purpoſe.* Have we not had all our Life-Time to prepare to die? So many Years to make ready for one Hour, and are we ſo unready and unwilling yet? What have we done? Why have we lived? Had we any greater Matters to mind? Would we have wiſhed for more frequent Warnings? How oft hath Death entered the Habitations of our Neighbours? How oft hath it knocked at our own Doors? How many Diſtempers have vexed our Bodies, that we have been forced to receive *the Sentence of Death?* And are we unready and unwilling after all this? O careleſs, dead-hearted Sinners! unworthy Neglecters of God's Warnings! faithleſs Betrayers of our own Souls!

§ 21.

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§ 21. *Consider, Not to die, is, Never to be happy.* To escape Death, is, to miss of Blessedness; except God should translate us, as *Enoch* and *Elijah*; which he never did before, or since. *If in this Life only we have Hope in Christ, we are of all Men most miserable.* If you would not die, and go to Heaven, what would you have more than an *Epicure*, or a Beast? Why do we pray, and fast, and mourn? Why do we suffer the Contempt of the World? Why are we *Christians*, and not *Pagans* and *Infidels*; if we do not desire a Life to come? Wouldst thou lose thy Faith and Labour, *Christian*, all thy Duties and Sufferings, all the End of thy Life, and all the Blood of Christ, and be contented with the Portion of a Worldling or a Brute? Rather say, as one did on his Death-Bed, when he was asked whether he was willing to die or no, "Let "him be loth to die, who is loth to be with Christ." ——*Is God willing by Death to glorify us, and are we unwilling to die, that we may be glorified?* Methinks, if a Prince were willing to make you his Heir, you would scarce be unwilling to accept it; the refusing such a Kindness would discover Ingratitude and Unworthiness. As God hath resolved against them, who make Excuses when they should come to Christ, *none of those Men, which were bidden, shall taste of my Supper*; so is it just with him to resolve against us, who frame Excuses when we should come to Glory.——*The Lord Jesus Christ was willing to come from Heaven to Earth for us, and shall we be unwilling to remove from Earth to Heaven for ourselves and Him?* He might have said, "What is it to me, if these Sinners suffer? "If they value their Flesh above their Spirits, and "their Lusts above my Father's Love, if they will "sell their Souls for nought, who is it fit should be "the Loser? Should I, whom they have wronged? "Must they wilfully transgress my Law, and I undergo

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" their deſerved Pain? Muſt I come down from Hea-
" ven to Earth, and cloath myſelf with human Fleſh,
" be ſpit-upon and ſcorned by Man, and faſt, and
" weep, and ſweat, and ſuffer, and bleed, and die a
" curſed Death; and all this for wretched Worms,
" who had rather hazard their Souls, than forbear
" one forbidden Morſel? Do they caſt away them-
" ſelves ſo ſlightly, and muſt I redeem them ſo dearly?"
Thus we ſee Chriſt had Reaſon enough to have made him unwilling; and yet did he voluntarily condeſcend. But we have no Reaſon againſt our coming to him; except we will reaſon againſt our Hopes, and plead for a Perpetuity of our own Calamities. Chriſt came down to fetch us up; and would we have him loſe his Blood and Labour, and go again without us? Hath he bought our Reſt at ſo dear a Rate? Is our Inheritance *purchaſed with his Blood?* And are we, after all this, loth to enter? Ah, Sirs! it was Chriſt, and not we, that had Cauſe to be loth. May the Lord forgive, and heal, this fooliſh Ingratitude!

§ 22. *Do we not combine with our moſt cruel Foes in their moſt malicious Deſigns, while we are loth to die, and go to Heaven?* What is the Devil's daily Buſineſs? Is it not to keep our Souls from God? And ſhall we be content with this? Is it not the one Half of Hell, which we wiſh to ourſelves, while we deſire to be abſent from Heaven? What Sport is this to Satan, that his Deſires and thine, *Chriſtian*, ſhould ſo concur? that when he ſees he cannot get thee to Hell, he can ſo long keep thee out of Heaven, and make thee the earneſt Petitioner for it thyſelf? O gratify not the Devil ſo much to thy own Injury!——*Do not our daily Fears of Death make our Lives a continual Torment?* Thoſe Lives which might be full of Joy, in the daily Contemplations of the Life to come, and the ſweet delightful Thoughts of Bliſs; how do we fill them up with

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with causeless Terrors? Thus we consume our own Comforts, and prey upon our truest Pleasures. When we might lie down, and rise up, and walk abroad, with our Hearts full of the Joys of God, we continually fill them with perplexing Fears. For he that fears dying, must be always fearing; because he hath always Reason to expect it. And how can that Man's Life be comfortable, who lives in continual Fear of losing his Comforts?——*Are not these Fears of Death self-created Sufferings?* As if God had not inflicted enough upon us, but we must inflict more upon ourselves. Is not Death bitter enough to the Flesh of itself, but we must double and treble its Bitterness? The Sufferings laid upon us by God, do all lead to happy Issues; the Progress is, from *Tribulation* to *Patience*, from thence to *Experience*, and so to *Hope*, and at last to *Glory*. But the Sufferings we make for ourselves, are circular and endless, from Sin to Suffering, from Suffering to Sin, and so to Suffering again: And not only so, but they multiply in their Course; every Sin is greater than the former, and so every Suffering also: So that except we think God hath made us to be our own Tormentors, we have small Reason to nourish our Fears of Death.——*And are they not useless, unprofitable Fears?* As all our Care *cannot make one Hair white or black*, nor *add one Cubit to our Stature*; so neither can our Fear prevent our Sufferings, nor delay our Death one Hour; willing or unwilling, we must away. Many a Man's Fears have hastened his End, but no Man's ever did avert it. 'Tis true, a cautious Fear, concerning the Danger after Death, hath profited many, and is very useful to the preventing of that Danger; but for a Member of Christ, and an Heir of Heaven, to be afraid of entering his own Inheritance, is a sinful, useless Fear.——*And do not our Fears of dying insnare our Souls, and add Strength to*

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many Temptations? What made *Peter* deny his Lord? What makes Apostates in suffering Times forsake the Truth? Why doth the green Blade of unrooted Faith wither before the Heat of Persecution? Fear of Imprisonment and Poverty may do much, but Fear of Death will do much more. So much Fear as we have of Death, so much Cowardice we usually have in the Cause of God: Beside the Multitude of unbelieving Contrivances, and Discontents at the wise Disposals of God, and hard Thoughts of most of his Providences, which this Sin doth make us guilty of.

§ 23. *Let us farther consider, what a competent Time most of us have had.* Why should not a Man, that would die at all, be as willing at Thirty or Forty, if God see fit, as at Seventy or Eighty? Length of Time doth not conquer Corruption; it never withers nor decays, thro' Age. Except we receive an Addition of Grace, as well as Time, we naturally grow worse. "O my Soul, depart in Peace! As thou wouldst not "desire an unlimited State in Wealth and Honour, so "desire it not in Point of Time. If thou wast sensible, how little thou deservest an Hour of that Patience which thou hast enjoyed, thou wouldst think "thou hast had a large Part. Is it not divine Wisdom that sets the Bounds? God will honour himself by various Persons, and several Ages, and not "by one Person or Age. Seeing thou hast acted thine "own Part, and finished thine appointed Course, "come down contentedly, that others may succeed, "who must have their Turns as well as thyself. "Much Time hath much Duty. Beg therefore for "Grace to improve it better; but be content with thy "Share of Time."——"*Thou hast also had a Competency of the Comforts of Life.* God might have "made thy Life a Burthen, till thou hadst been as "weary of possessing it, as thou art now afraid of "losing

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" losing it. He might have suffered thee to have consumed thy Days in Ignorance, without the saving " Knowledge of Christ: But He hath opened thine " Eyes in the Morning of thy Days, and acquainted " thee betimes with the Business of thy Life. Hath " thy heavenly Father caused thy Lot to fall in *Europe*, " not in *Asia*, *Africa*, or *America*; in *England*, not " in *Spain* or *Italy*? Hath He filled up all thy Life " with Mercies, and dost thou now think thy Share " too small? What a Multitude of Hours of Consolation, of delightful Sabbaths, of pleasant Studies, " of precious Companions, of wonderful Deliverances, " of excellent Opportunities, of fruitful Labours, of " joyful Tidings, of sweet Experiences, of astonishing " Providences, hath thy Life partaken of? Hath thy " Life been so sweet, that thou art loth to leave it? " Is that thy Thanks to Him, who is thus drawing " thee to his own Sweetness? O foolish Soul! would " thou wast as covetous after Eternity, as thou art " for a fading, perishing Life! and after the Presence " of God in Glory, as thou art for Continuance on " Earth! Then thou wouldst cry, *why is his Chariot* " *so long in coming? why tarry the Wheels of his Cha-* " *riots?* How long, Lord! how long!"——" *What* " *if God should let thee live many Years, but deny thee the* " *Mercies which thou hast hitherto enjoyed?* Might He " not give thee Life, as He gave the murmuring *Israelites* Quails? He might give thee Life, till thou " art weary of living, and as glad to be rid of it as " *Judas*, or *Achitophel*; and make thee like many " miserable Creatures in the World, who can hardly " forbear laying violent Hands on themselves. Be not " therefore so importunate for Life, which may prove " a Judgment, instead of a Blessing."——*How many* " *of the precious Servants of God, of all Ages and Places,* " *have gone before thee?* Thou art not to enter an " untrodden

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" untrodden Path, nor appointed first to break the Ice. " Except *Enoch* and *Elijah*, which of the Saints have " escaped Death? And art thou better than they? " There are many Millions of Saints dead, more than " now remain on Earth. What a Number of thine " own Bosom-Friends, and Companions in Duty, are " now gone, and why shouldst thou be so loth to " follow? Nay, hath not Jesus Christ himself gone " this Way? Hath He not sanctified the Grave to " us, and perfumed the Dust with his own Body, and " art thou loth to follow him too? Rather say as *Thomas*, *Let us also go, that we may die with him.*"

§ 24. If what hath been said, will not persuade, Scripture and Reason have little Force. And I have said the more on this Subject, finding it so needful to myself and others; finding among so many Christians, who could do and suffer much for Christ, so few that can willingly die; and of many, who have somewhat subdued other Corruptions, so few have got the Conquest of this. I persuade not the Ungodly from fearing Death: 'Tis a Wonder rather, that they fear it no more, and spend not their Days in continual Horror.

CHAP.

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CHAP. XI.

The Importance of leading a heavenly Life upon Earth.

§ 1. *The Reasonableness of delighting in the Thoughts of the Saint's Rest.* § 2. *Christians exhorted to it, by considering*; § 3. (1) *it will evidence their sincere Piety*; § 4. (2) *it is the highest Excellence of the Christian Temper*; § 5. (3) *it leads to the most comfortable Life*; § 6—9. (4) *it will be the best Preservative from Temptations to Sin*; § 10. (5) *it will invigorate their Graces and Duties*; § 11. (6) *it will be their best Cordial in all Afflictions*; § 12. (7) *it will render them most profitable to others*; § 13. (8) *it will honour God*; § 14. (9) *without it, we disobey the Commands, and lose the most gracious and delightful Discoveries of the Word of God*; § 15. (10) *it is the more reasonable to have our Hearts with God, as His is so much on us*; § 16, 17. *and* (11) *in Heaven, where we have so much Interest and Relation*; § 18. (12) *besides, there is nothing, but Heaven, worth setting our Hearts upon.* § 19. *Transition to the Subject of the next Chapter.*

§ 1. IS there such a Rest remaining for us? Why then are our Thoughts no more upon it? Why are not our Hearts continually there? Why dwell we not there in constant Contemplation? What is the Cause of this Neglect? Are we reasonable in this, or are we not? Hath the eternal God provided us such a Glory,

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a Glory, and promised to take us up to dwell with himself, and is not this worth thinking on? Should not the strongest Desires of our Hearts be after it? Do we believe this, and yet forget and neglect it? If God will not give us Leave to approach this Light, what means all his earnest Invitations? Why doth He so condemn our Earthly-mindedness, and command us to set our Affections on Things above? Ah vile Hearts! If God were against it, we were likelier to be for it; but when He commands our Hearts to Heaven, then they will not stir one Inch: Like our Predecessors, the sinful *Israelites*; when God would have them march for *Canaan*, then they mutiny, and will not stir; but when God bids them not go, then they will be presently marching. If God say, *love not the World, nor the Things of the World*; we dote upon it. How freely, how frequently can we think of our Pleasures, our Friends, our Labours, our Flesh and its Lusts, yea, our Wrongs and Miseries, our Fears and Sufferings? But where is the Christian, whose Heart is on his Rest? What is the Matter? Are we so full of Joy, that we need no more? Or is there nothing in Heaven for our joyous Thoughts? Or rather, are not our Hearts carnal and stupid? Let us humble these sensual Hearts that have in them no more of Christ and Glory. If this World was the only Subject of our Discourse, all would count us ungodly; why then may we not call our Hearts ungodly, that have so little Delight in Christ and Heaven?

§ 2. But I am speaking only to those, whose Portion is in Heaven, whose Hopes are there, and who have forsaken all to enjoy this Glory; and shall I be discouraged from persuading such to be Heavenly-minded? *Fellow Christians*, if you will not hear and obey, who will? Well may we be discouraged to

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exhort the blind, ungodly World, and may say, as *Moses* did, *Behold the Children of Israel have not hearkened unto me, how then shall Pharaoh hear me?* I require thee, *Reader*, as ever thou hopest for a Part in this Glory, that thou presently take thy Heart to task, chide it for its wilful Strangeness to God, turn thy Thoughts from the Pursuit of Vanity, bend thy Soul to study Eternity, busy it about the Life to come, habituate thyself to such Contemplations, and let not those Thoughts be seldom and cursory, but bathe thy Soul in Heaven's Delights; and if thy backward Soul begin to flag, and thy Thoughts to scatter, call them back, hold them to their Work, bear not with their Laziness, nor connive at one Neglect. And when thou hast, in Obedience to God, tried this Work, got acquainted with it, and kept a Guard on thy Thoughts till they are accustomed to obey, thou wilt then find thyself in the Suburbs of Heaven, and that there is indeed a Sweetness in the Work and Way of God, and that the Life of Christianity is a Life of Joy. Thou wilt meet with those abundant Consolations which thou hast prayed, panted, and groaned after, and which so few Christians do ever here obtain, because they know not this Way to them, or else make not Conscience of walking in it. Say not "We are unable to set our own Hearts on Heaven; "this must be the Work of God only." Tho' God be the chief Disposer of your Hearts, yet next under him you have the greatest Command of them yourselves. Though without Christ you can do nothing, yet under him you may do much, and must, or else it will be undone, and yourselves undone thro' your Neglect. *Christians*, if your Souls were healthful and vigorous, they would perceive incomparably more Delight and Sweetness in the believing joyful Thoughts of your future Blessedness, than the soundest Stomach finds

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finds in its Food, or the ſtrongeſt Senſes in the Enjoyment of their Objects; ſo little painful would this Work be to you. But becauſe I know while we have Fleſh about us, and any Remains of that *carnal Mind, which is Enmity to God* and to this noble Work, that all Motives are little enough, I will here lay down *ſome Conſiderations*, which, if you will deliberately weigh with an impartial Judgment, I doubt not but they will prove effectual with your Hearts, and make you reſolve on this excellent Duty. More particularly conſider;——it will *evidence your ſincere Piety*;——it is *the higheſt Excellence of the Chriſtian Temper*;——it is *the Way to live moſt comfortably*;——it will be *the beſt Preſervative from Temptations to Sin*;——it will *enliven your Graces and Duties*;——it will be your *beſt Cordial in all Afflictions*;——it will *render you moſt profitable to others*;——it will *honour God*;——*without it, you will diſobey the Commands, and loſe the moſt gracious and delightful Diſcoveries of the Word of God*;——it is alſo the more *reaſonable to have your Hearts with God, as His is ſo much on you*;——and *in Heaven, where you have ſo much Intereſt and Relation*;——beſides, *there is nothing, but Heaven, worth ſetting your Hearts upon.*

§ 3. (1) *Conſider, a Heart ſet upon Heaven will be one of the moſt unqueſtionable Evidences of your Sincerity, and a clear Diſcovery of a true Work of ſaving Grace upon your Souls.* You are often aſking, "How ſhall "we know that we are truly ſanctified?" Here you have a Sign infallible from the Mouth of Jeſus Chriſt himſelf; *where your Treaſure is, there will your Hearts be alſo* (a). God is the Saint's Treaſure and Happineſs; Heaven is the Place where they muſt fully enjoy him. A Heart therefore ſet upon Heaven, is no more but a Heart ſet upon God; and ſurely a Heart

(a) Matt. vi. 21.

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ſet upon God through Chriſt, is the trueſt Evidence of ſaving Grace. When Learning will be no Proof of Grace; when Knowledge, Duties, Gifts will fail; when Arguments from thy Tongue, or Hand, may be confuted; yet then will this from the Bent of thy Heart prove thee ſincere. Take a poor Chriſtian, of a weak Underſtanding, a feeble Memory, a ſtammering Tongue; yet his Heart is ſet on God, he hath choſen Him for his Portion, his Thoughts are on Eternity, his Deſires there, he cries out, "O that I "were there!" he takes that Day for a Time of Impriſonment, in which he hath not had one refreſhing View of Eternity; I had rather die in this Man's Condition, than in the Caſe of him who hath the moſt eminent Gifts, and is moſt admired for his Performances, while his Heart is not thus taken up with God. The Man that Chriſt will find out at the laſt Day, and condemn for Want of *a Wedding-Garment*, will be one that wants this Frame of Heart. The Queſtion will not then be, how much have you *known*, or *profeſſed*, or *talked?* but, how much have you *loved*, and where was your Heart? *Chriſtians*, as you would have a Proof of your Title to Glory, labour to get your Hearts above. If Sin and Satan keep not your Affections from thence, they will never be able to keep away your Perſons.

§ 4. (2) *A Heart in Heaven is the higheſt Excellence of your Chriſtian Temper.* As there is a common Excellence, by which Chriſtians differ from the World; ſo there is this peculiar Dignity of Spirit, by which the more excellent differ from the reſt. As the nobleſt of Creatures, ſo the nobleſt of Chriſtians are they whoſe Faces are ſet moſt direct for Heaven. Such an heavenly Saint, who hath been wrapt up to God in his Contemplations, and is newly come down from the Views of Chriſt, what Diſcoveries will he make

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make of those superior Regions! how high and sacred is his Discourse! Enough to convince an understanding Hearer, that he had seen the Lord, and that no Man could speak such Words, except he had been with God. This, this is the noble Christian. The most famous Mountains and Trees are those that reach nearest to Heaven; and he is the choicest Christian, whose Heart is most frequently and most delightfully there. If a Man have lived near the King, or hath seen the *Sultan* of *Persia*, or the *Great Turk*, he will be thought a Step higher than his Neighbours. What then shall we judge of him that daily travels as far as Heaven, and there hath seen *the King of Kings*, hath frequent Admittance into the divine Presence, and feasteth his Soul upon the Tree of Life? For my Part, I value this Man before the noblest, the richest, the most learned in the World.

§ 5. (3) *A heavenly Mind is the nearest and truest Way to a Life of Comfort.* The Countries far North are cold and frozen, because they are distant from the Sun. What makes such frozen uncomfortable Christians, but their living so far from Heaven? And what makes others so warm in Comforts, but their living higher, and having nearer Access to God? When the Sun in the Spring draws near our Part of the Earth, how do all Things congratulate its Approach? The Earth looks green, the Trees shoot forth, the Plants revive, the Birds sing, and all Things smile upon us. If we would but try this Life with God, and keep these Hearts above, what a Spring of Joy would be within us? How should we forget our Winter-Sorrows? How early should we rise to sing the Praise of our Great Creator? O *Christian*, get above. Those that have been there, have found it warmer; and I doubt not but thou hast sometime tried it

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thyſelf. When have you largeſt Comforts? Is it not, when thou haſt converſed with God, and talked with the Inhabitants of the higher World, and viewed their Manſions, and filled thy Soul with the Fore-Thoughts of Glory? If thou knoweſt by Experience what this Practice is, I dare ſay thou knoweſt what ſpiritual Joy is. If, as *David* profeſſes, *the Light of God's Countenance more gladdens the Heart than Corn, and Wine*; then ſurely they that draw neareſt, and moſt behold it, muſt be fulleſt of theſe Joys. Whom ſhould we blame then, that we are ſo void of Conſolation, but our own negligent Hearts? God hath provided us a Crown of Glory, and promiſed to ſet it ſhortly on our Heads, and we will not ſo much as think of it; He bids us behold and rejoice, and we will not ſo much as look at it; and yet we complain for Want of Comfort. It is by *believing* that we are *filled with Joy and Peace*, and no longer than we continue our believing. It is *in Hope* the Saints *rejoice*, and no longer than they continue hoping. God's Spirit worketh our Comforts, by ſetting our own Spirits on work upon the Promiſes, and raiſing our Thoughts to the Place of our Comforts. As you would delight a covetous Man by ſhewing him Gold; ſo God delights his People by leading them, as it were, into Heaven, and ſhewing them Himſelf, and their Reſt with Him. He does not caſt in our Joys while we are idle, or taken up with other Things. He gives the Fruits of the Earth while we plow, and ſow, and weed, and water, and dung, and dreſs, and with Patience expect his Bleſſing; ſo doth He give the Joys of the Soul. I intreat thee, *Reader*, in the Name of the Lord, and as thou valueſt the Life of conſtant Joy, and that good Conſcience, which is a continual Feaſt, to ſet upon this Work ſeriouſly, and learn the Art of Heavenly-mindedneſs, and thou ſhalt find the Increaſe an Hundred-

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dred-fold, and the Benefit abundantly exceed thy Labour. But this is the Misery of Man's Nature; though every Man naturally hates Sorrow, and loves the most merry and joyful Life, yet few love the Way to Joy, or will endure the Pains by which it is obtained; they will take the next that comes to Hand, and content themselves with earthly Pleasures, rather than they will ascend to Heaven to seek it; and yet when all is done, they must have it there, or be without it.

§ 6. (4) *A Heart in Heaven will be a most excellent Preservative against Temptations to Sin.*——*It will keep the Heart well employed.* When we are idle, we tempt the Devil to tempt us; as careless Persons make Thieves. A Heart in Heaven can reply to the Tempter, as *Nehemiah* did, *I am doing a great Work, so that I cannot come.* It hath no Leisure to be lustful or wanton, ambitious or worldly. If you were but busy in your lawful Callings, you would not be so ready to hearken to Temptations; much less if you were also busy above with God. Would a Judge be perswaded to rise from the Bench, when he is sitting upon Life and Death, to go and play with Children in the Streets? No more will a Christian, when he is taking a Survey of his Eternal Rest, give Ear to the alluring Charms of Satan. The Children of that Kingdom should never have Time for Trifles, especially when they are employed in the Affairs of the Kingdom; and this Employment is one of the Saint's chief Preservatives from Temptations.

§ 7.——*A heavenly Mind is the freest from Sin, because it hath truer and livelier Apprehensions of spiritual Things.* He hath so deep an Insight into the Evil of Sin, the Vanity of the Creature, the Brutishness of fleshly sensual Delights, that Temptations have little Power over him. *In vain the Net is spread,* says *Solo-*

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mon, in the Sight of any Bird. And usually in vain doth Satan lay his Snares to entrap the Soul that plainly sees them. Earth is the Place for his Temptations, and Earth the ordinary Bait; and how shall these ensnare the Christian, who hath left the Earth, and walks with God? Is Converse with wise and learned Men, the Way to make one wise? much more is Converse with God. If Travellers return home with Wisdom and Experience, how much more he that travels to Heaven? If our Bodies are suited to the Air and Climate we most live in; his Understanding must be fuller of Light, who lives with the Father of Lights. The Men of the World, that dwell below, and know no other Conversation but earthly, no Wonder if their *Understanding be darkened*, and Satan *takes them captive at his Will.* How can Worms and Moles see, whose Dwelling is always in the Earth? While this Dust is in their Eyes, no Wonder they mistake Gain for Godliness, Sin for Grace, the World for God, their own Wills for the Law of Christ, and in the Issue Hell for Heaven. But when a Christian withdraws himself from his worldly Thoughts, and begins to converse with God in Heaven, methinks he is, as *Nebuchadnezzar*, taken from the Beasts of the Field to the Throne, and *his Reason returneth unto him.* When he hath had a Glimpse of Eternity, and looks down on the World again, how doth he charge with Folly his Neglects of Christ, his fleshly Pleasures, his earthly Cares? How doth he say to his *Laughter, it is mad*; and to his vain *Mirth, what doth it?* How doth he verily think there is *no* Man in *Bedlam* so truly mad, as wilful Sinners, and unworthy Slighters of Christ and Glory? This makes a dying Man usually wiser than others, because he looks on Eternity as near, and hath more Heart-piercing Thoughts of it, than he ever had in Health and

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and Prosperity. Then many of the most bitter Enemies of the Saints have their Eyes opened, and, like *Balaam*, cry out, *O that I might die the Death of the Righteous, and that my last End might be like his!* Yet let the same Men recover, and lose their Apprehensions of the Life to come, and how quickly do they lose their Understandings with it? Tell a dying Sinner of the Riches, Honours, or Pleasures of the World, and would he not answer, "What's all this "to me, who must presently appear before God, and "give Account of all my Life?" *Christian*, if the apprehended Nearness of Eternity will work such strange Effects upon the Ungodly, and make them so much wiser than before; O what rare Effects would it produce in thee, if thou couldst always dwell in the Views of God, and in lively Thoughts of thy everlasting State! Surely a Believer, if he improve his Faith, may ordinarily have more quickening Apprehensions of the Life to come, in the Time of his Health, than an Unbeliever hath at the Hour of his Death.

§ 8. ——*A heavenly Mind is also fortified against Temptations, because the Affections are thoroughly prepossessed with the high Delights of another World.* He that loves most, and not he that only knows most, will most easily resist the Motions of Sin. The Will doth as sweetly relish Goodness, as the Understanding doth Truth; and here lies much of a Christian's Strength. When thou hast had a fresh delightful Taste of Heaven, thou wilt not be so easily persuaded from it. You cannot persuade a Child to part with his Sweet-meats, while he hath the Taste in his Mouth. O that you would be much in feeding on *the hidden Manna*, and be frequently tasting the Delights of Heaven! How would this confirm thy Resolutions, and make thee despise the Fooleries of

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the World, and scorn to be cheated with such childish Toys? If the Devil had set-upon *Peter* in the Mount of Transfiguration, when he saw *Moses* and *Elias* talking with Christ, would he so easily have been drawn to deny his Lord? What, with all that Glory in his Eye? No. So if he should set upon a believing Soul, when he is taken up in the Mount with Christ, what would such a Soul say? "Get thee "behind me, Satan; wouldst thou persuade me hence "with trifling Pleasures, and steal my Heart from "this my Rest? Wouldst thou have me sell these "Joys for nothing? Is there any Honour or Delight "like this? or can that be Profit, for which I must "lose this?" But Satan stays till we are come down, and the Taste of Heaven is out of our Mouths, and the Glory we saw is even forgotten, and then he easily deceives our Hearts. Though the *Israelites* below eat, and drink, and rise up to play before their Idol, *Moses* in the Mount will not do so. O if we could keep the Taste of our Souls continually delighted with the Sweetness above, with what Disdain should we spit out the Baits of Sin?

§ 9. ——*Besides, whilst the Heart is set on Heaven, a Man is under God's Protection.* If Satan then assault us, God is more engaged for our Defence, and will doubtless stand by us, and say, *My Grace is sufficient for thee.* When a Man is in the Way of God's Blessing, he is in the less Danger of Sin's enticing. Amidst thy Temptations, *Christian Reader*, use much this powerful Remedy; keep close with God by a *heavenly Mind*; follow your Business above with Christ, and you will find this a surer Help than any other. *The Way of Life is above to the Wise, that he may depart from Hell beneath* (b). Remember that *Noah was a just Man, and perfect in his Generations*; for

(b) Prov. xv. 24.

for he *walked with God:* And that God said to *Abraham, walk before me, and be thou perfect.*

§ 10. (5) *The diligent keeping your Hearts in Heaven, will maintain the Vigour of all your Graces, and put Life into all your Duties.* The heavenly Christian is the lively Christian. 'Tis our Strangeness to Heaven that makes us so dull. How will the Soldier hazard his Life, and the Mariner pass through Storms and Waves, and no Difficulty keep them back, when they think of an uncertain perishing Treasure? What Life then would it put into a Christian's Endeavours, if he would frequently think of his everlasting Treasure? We run so slowly, and strive so lazily, because we so little mind the Prize. Observe but the Man who is much in Heaven, and you shall see he is not like other Christians; there is something of what he hath seen above, appeareth in all his Duty and Conversation. If a Preacher, how heavenly are his Sermons! If a private Christian, what heavenly Converse, Prayers, and Deportment! Set upon this Employment, and others will see *the Face* of your Conversation *shine*, and say, surely he hath been *with God in the Mount.* But if you lie complaining of Deadness and Dulness, that you cannot love Christ, nor rejoice in his Love, that you have no Life in Prayer, nor any other Duty; and yet neglect this quickening Employment; you are the Cause of your own Complaints. Is not thy *Life hid with Christ in God?* Where must thou go, but to Christ for it? And where is that, but to Heaven, *where Christ is? Thou wilt not come to Christ, that thou mayst have Life.* If thou wouldst have Light and Heat, why art thou no more in the Sun-shine? For Want of this Recourse to Heaven, thy Soul is a Lamp that is not lighted, and thy Duties as a Sacrifice which hath no Fire. Fetch one Coal daily from this Altar, and see

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if thy Offering will not burn. Light thy Lamp at this Flame, and feed it daily with Oil from hence, and see if it will not gloriously shine. Keep close to this reviving Fire, and see if thy Affections will not be warm. In thy Want of Love to God, lift up thy Eye of Faith to Heaven, behold his Beauty, contemplate his Excellencies, and see whether his Amiableness and perfect Goodness will not ravish thy Heart. As Exercise maintaineth Appetite, Strength, and Vigour to the Body; so these heavenly Exercises will quickly cause the Increase of Grace and spiritual Life. Besides, it is not false or strange Fire, which you fetch from Heaven for your Sacrifices. The Zeal which is kindled by your Meditations on Heaven, is most likely to be a heavenly Zeal. Some Men's Fervency is only drawn from their Books, and some from the Sharpness of Affliction, and some from the Mouth of a moving Minister, and some from the Attention of an Auditory; but he that knows this Way to Heaven, and derives it daily from the true Fountain, shall have his Soul revived with the Water of Life, and enjoy that Quickening which is peculiar to the Saints. *By* this *Faith* thou mayst *offer Abel's Sacrifice, more excellent than* that of common Men, and *by it obtain Witness, that thou art righteous, God testifying of thy Gifts*, that they are sincere. When others are ready, like *Baal's Priests*, to *cut themselves*, because their Sacrifice will not burn; thou mayst breath the Spirit of *Elijah*, and in the Chariot of Contemplation soar aloft, till thy Soul and Sacrifice gloriously flame, tho' the Flesh and the World should cast upon them all the Water of their opposing Enmity. Say not, how can Mortals ascend to Heaven? Faith hath Wings, and Meditation is its Chariot. Faith is as a Burning Glass to thy Sacrifice, and Meditation sets it to the Face of the Sun; only take it not

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away too soon, but hold it there a while, and thy Soul will feel the happy Effect. *Reader*, art thou not thinking, when thou seest a lively Christian, and heareſt his lively fervent Prayers, and edifying Discourse, " O how happy a Man is this! O that my " Soul were in this blessed Condition!" Why, I here advise thee from God, set thy Soul conscientiously to this Work, *wash thee* frequently *in* this *Jordan*, and thy leprous dead Soul will revive, *and thou shalt know that there is a God in Israel*, and that thou mayst live a vigorous and joyful Life, if thou dost not wilfully neglect thy own Mercies.

§ 11. (6) *The frequent believing Views of Glory are the most precious Cordials in all Afflictions.* These Cordials, by chearing our Spirits, render our Sufferings far more easy; enable us to bear them with Patience and Joy; and so strengthen our Resolutions, that we forsake not Christ for Fear of Trouble. If the Way be ever so rough, can it be tedious, if it lead to Heaven? O sweet Sickness, Reproaches, Imprisonments, or Death, accompanied with these Tastes of our future Rest! This keeps the Suffering from the Soul, so that it can only touch the Flesh. Had it not been for that little (alas, too little) Taste which I had of Rest, my Sufferings would have been grievous, and Death more terrible: I may say, *I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the Goodness of the Lord in the Land of the Living. Unless* this promised Rest *had been my Delight, I should then have perished in mine Affliction. One Thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the House of the Lord all the Days of my Life, to behold the Beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his Temple. For in the Time of Trouble He shall hide me in his Pavilion; in the Secret of his Tabernacle shall He hide me; He shall set me up upon a Rock. And now shall mine Head be lifted*

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up above mine Enemies round about me. Therefore will I offer in his Tabernacle Sacrifices of Joy, I will sing, yea, I will sing Praises unto the Lord (c). All Sufferings are nothing to us, so far as we have these supporting Joys. When Persecution and Fear hath *shut the Doors, Christ* can *come in, and stand in the Midst, and say to his Disciples, Peace be unto you. Paul* and *Silas* can be in Heaven, even when they are *thrust into the inner Prison*, their Bodies scourged with *many Stripes, and their Feet fast in the Stocks.* The *Martyrs* find more Rest in their Flames, than their Persecutors in their Pomp and Tyranny; because they foresee the Flames they escape, and the Rest which their fiery Chariot is conveying them to. If *the Son of God* will *walk with us*, we are safe *in the Midst of* those *Flames*, which shall devour them that cast us in. *Abraham went out* of his Country, *not knowing whither he went*; because *he looked for a City which hath Foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God. Moses esteemed the Reproach of Christ greater Riches than the Treasures in Egypt*; because *he had Respect unto the Recompence of Reward. He forsook Egypt, not fearing the Wrath of the King*; because *he endured as seeing Him who is invisible. Others were tortured, not accepting Deliverance, that they might obtain a better Resurrection.* Even *Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our Faith, for the Joy that was set before him, endured the Cross, despising the Shame, and is set down at the right Hand of the Throne of God.* This is the noble Advantage of Faith, it can look on the Means and End together. This is the great Reason of our Impatience, and censuring of God, because we gaze on the Evil itself, but fix not our Thoughts on what's beyond it. They that saw Christ only on the Cross, or in the Grave, do *shake their Heads*, and think

(c) Psalm xxvii. 13. cxix. 92. xxvii. 4--6.

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think him loſt; but God ſaw him dying, buried, riſing, glorified, and all this at one View. Faith will in this imitate God, ſo far as it hath the Glaſs of a Promiſe to help it. We ſee God burying us under Ground, but we foreſee not the Spring, when we ſhall all revive. Could we but clearly ſee Heaven, as the End of all God's Dealings with us, ſurely none of his Dealings could be ſo grievous. If God would once raiſe us to this Life, we ſhould find, that tho' Heaven and Sin are at a great Diſtance; yet Heaven and a Priſon, or Baniſhment, Heaven and *the Belly of a Whale*, or a *Den of Lions*, Heaven and conſuming Sickneſs, or invading Death, are at no ſuch Diſtance. But as *Abraham ſaw Chriſt's Day, and rejoiced*; ſo we, in our moſt forlorn State, might ſee that Day when Chriſt ſhall give us Reſt and therein rejoice. I beſeech thee, *Chriſtian*, for the Honour of the Goſpel, and for thy Soul's Comfort, be not to learn this heavenly Art, when in thy greateſt Extremity thou haſt moſt need to uſe it. He that, with *Stephen, ſees the Glory of God, and Jeſus ſtanding on the right Hand of God*, will comfortably bear the Shower of Stones. *The Joy of the Lord is our Strength*, and that Joy muſt be fetch'd from the Place of our Joy; and if we walk without our Strength, how long are we like to endure?

§ 12. (7) *He that hath his Converſation in Heaven, is the profitable Chriſtian to all about him.* When a Man is in a ſtrange Country, how glad is he of the Company of one of his own Nation? How delightful is it to talk of their own Country, their Acquaintance, and Affairs at home? With what Pleaſure did *Joſeph* talk with his Brethren, and enquire after his Father, and his Brother *Benjamin*? Is it not ſo to a Chriſtian, to talk with his Brethren that have been above, and enquire after his Father, and Chriſt his Lord? When

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When a worldly Man will talk of nothing but the World, and a Politician of State-Affairs, and a mere Scholar of human Learning, and a common Professor of his Duties; the heavenly Man will be speaking of Heaven, and the strange Glory his Faith hath seen, and our speedy and blessed Meeting there. O how refreshing and useful are his Expressions! How his Words pierce and melt the Heart, and transform the Hearers into other Men! How doth his *Doctrine drop as the Rain*, and his *Speech distil as the Dew, as the small Rain upon the tender Herb, and as the Showers upon the Grass*, while his Lips *publish the Name of the Lord*, and *ascribe Greatness unto his God!* Is not his sweet Discourse of Heaven, like the *Box of precious Ointment*, which, being *pour'd on the Head of Christ, filled the House with the Odour?* All that are near may be refreshed by it. Happy the People that have a heavenly Minister! Happy the Children and Servants that have a heavenly Father or Master! Happy the Man that hath a heavenly Companion, who will watch over thy Ways, strengthen thee when thou art weak, chear thee when thou art drooping, and *comfort thee with the Comfort wherewith he himself* hath been so often *comforted of God!* This is he that will be always blowing at the Spark of thy spiritual Life, and drawing thy Soul to God, and will say to thee, as the *Samaritan Woman*, "*Come and see one that hath* "*told me all that ever I did*; one that hath loved our "Souls to the Death. *Is not this the Christ?* Is not "*the Knowledge of God and Him, eternal Life?* Is it not "the Glory of the Saints, to *see his Glory?*" Come to this Man's House, and sit at his Table, and he will feast thy Soul with the Dainties of Heaven: Travel with him by the Way, and he will direct and quicken thee in thy Journey to Heaven: Trade with him in the World, and he will counsel thee to buy

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the Pearl of great Price. If thou wrong him, he can pardon thee, remembering that Chriſt hath pardoned his greater Offences: If thou be angry, he is meek, conſidering the Meekneſs of his heavenly Pattern: Or if he fall out with you, he is ſoon reconciled, when he recollects that in Heaven you muſt be everlaſting Friends. This is the Chriſtian of the right Stamp, and all about him are the better for him. How unprofitable is the Society of all other Sorts of Chriſtians in Compariſon with this! If a Man ſhould come from Heaven, how would Men long to hear what Reports he would make of the other World, and what he had ſeen, and what the Bleſſed there enjoy? Would they not think this Man the beſt Companion, and his Diſcourſe the moſt profitable? Why then do you value the Company of Saints no more, and enquire no more of them, and reliſh their Diſcourſe no better? For every Saint ſhall go to Heaven in Perſon, and is frequently there in Spirit, and hath often viewed it in the Glaſs of the Goſpel. For my Part, I had rather have the Company of a heavenly-minded Chriſtian, than of the moſt learned Diſputants, or princely Commanders.

§ 13. (8) *No Man ſo highly honoureth God, as he whoſe Converſation is in Heaven.* Is not a Parent diſgraced, when Children feed on Huſks, are cloathed in Rags, and keep Company with none but Rogues and Beggars? Is it not ſo to our heavenly Father, when we, who call ourſelves his Children, feed on Earth, and the Garb of our Souls is like that of the naked World; and our Hearts familiarly converſe with, and *cleave to the Duſt*, rather than ſtand continually in our Father's Preſence? Surely we live below the Children of a King, not according to the Height of our Hopes, nor the Proviſion of our Father's Houſe, and the great Preparations made for his

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his Saints. It is well we have a Father of tender Bowels, who will own his Children in Rags. If He did not first challenge his Interest in us, neither ourselves, nor others could know us to be his People. But when a Christian can live above, and rejoice his Soul with the Things that are unseen; how is God honoured by such a one! The Lord will testify for him, "This Man believes me, and takes me at my "Word; he rejoiceth in my Promise, before he hath "Possession; he can be thankful for what his bodily "Eyes never saw; his Rejoicing is not in the Flesh; "his Heart is with me; he loves my Presence; and "he shall surely enjoy it in my Kingdom for ever. "*Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have be-*"*lieved. Them that honour me, I will honour.*" How did God esteem himself honoured by *Caleb* and *Joshua*, when they went into the promised Land, and brought back to their Brethren a Taste of the Fruits, and spake well of the good Land, and encouraged the People? What a Promise and Recompence did they receive?

§ 14. (9) *A Soul that doth not set its Affections on Things above, disobeys the Commands, and loses the most gracious and delightful Discoveries of the Word of God.* The same God that hath commanded thee to believe, and to be a Christian, hath commanded thee to *seek those Things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right Hand of God*, and to *set your Affection on Things above, not on Things on the Earth* (d). The same God that hath forbidden thee to murder, steal, or commit Adultery, hath forbidden thee the Neglect of this great Duty; and darest thou wilfully disobey him? Why not make Conscience of one, as well as the other? He hath made it thy Duty, as well as the Means of thy Comfort, that a double Bond may engage

(d) Col. iii. 1, 2.

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engage thee not to forſake thy own Mercies. Beſides, what are all the moſt glorious Deſcriptions of Heaven, all thoſe Diſcoveries of our future Bleſſedneſs, and precious Promiſes of our Reſt, but loſt to thee? Are not theſe the Stars in the Firmament of Scripture, and the golden Lines in that Book of God? Methinks thou ſhouldſt not part with one of thoſe Promiſes, no not for a World. As Heaven is the Perfection of all our Mercies, ſo the Promiſes of it in the Goſpel, are the very Soul of the Goſpel. Is a comfortable Word from the Mouth of God of ſuch Worth, that all the Comforts in the World are nothing to it? And doſt thou neglect and overlook ſo many of them? Why ſhould God reveal ſo much of his Counſel, and tell us before Hand of the Joys we ſhall poſſeſs, but to make us know it for our Joy? If it had not been to fill us with the Delights of our fore-known Bleſſedneſs, He might have kept his Purpoſe to himſelf, and never have let us know it till we come to enjoy it. Yea, when we had got Poſſeſſion of our Reſt, He might ſtill have concealed its Eternity from us, and then the Fears of loſing it would have much diminiſhed the Sweetneſs of our Joys. But it hath pleaſed our Father to open his Counſel, and let us know the very Intent of his Heart, that our Joy might be full, and that we might live as the Heirs of ſuch a Kingdom. And ſhall we now overlook all? Shall we live in earthly Cares and Sorrows, and rejoice no more in theſe Diſcoveries, than if the Lord had never wrote them? If thy Prince had but ſealed thee a Patent of ſome Lordſhip, how oft wouldſt thou caſt thine Eye upon it, and make it thy delightful Study, till thou ſhouldſt come to poſſeſs the Dignity itſelf? And hath God ſealed thee a Patent of Heaven, and doſt thou let it lie by thee, as if thou hadſt forgot it? O that our Hearts were as high

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as our Hopes, and our Hopes as high as these infallible Promises!

§ 15. (10) *It is but equal that our Hearts should be on God, when the Heart of God is so much on us.* If the Lord of Glory can stoop so low, as to set his Heart on sinful Dust, methinks we should easily be perswaded to set our Hearts on Christ and Glory, and ascend to him, in our daily Affections, who so much condescends to us. *Christian*, dost thou not perceive that the Heart of God is set upon thee, and that He is still minding thee with tender Love, even when thou forgettest both thyself and Him? Is He not following thee with daily Mercies, moving upon thy Soul, providing for thy Body, preserving both? Doth He not bear thee continually in the Arms of Love, and promise that *all shall work together for thy Good*, and suit all his Dealings to thy greatest Advantage, and *give his Angels Charge over thee?* And canst thou be taken up with the Joys below, and forget thy Lord, who forgets not thee? Unkind Ingratitude! When He speaks of his own Kindness for us, hear what He says, *Zion said, the Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a Woman forget her sucking Child, that she should not have Compassion on the Son of her Womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the Palms of my Hands; thy Walls are continually before me* (e). But when He speaks of our Regards to Him, the Case is otherwise. *Can a Maid forget her Ornaments, or a Bride her Attire; yet my People have forgotten me Days without Number* (f). As if He should say, "You "will not rise one Morning, but you will remember "to cover your Nakedness, nor forget your Vanity "of Dress; and are these of more Worth than your "God; of more Importance than your eternal Life! "And

(e) Isaiah xlix. 14--16. (f) Jer. ii. 32.

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" And yet you can forget theſe Day after Day." Give not God Cauſe thus to expoſtulate with us. Rather let our Souls get up to God, and viſit Him every Morning, and our Hearts be towards Him every Moment.

§ 16. (11) *Should not our Intereſt in Heaven, and our Relation to it, continually keep our Hearts upon it?* There our Father keeps his Court. We call him, *our Father which art in Heaven.* Unworthy Children! that can be ſo taken up in their Play, as to be mindleſs of ſuch a Father. There alſo is Chriſt our *Head*, our *Huſband*, our *Life*; and ſhall we not look towards him, and ſend to him, as oft as we can, till we come to ſee him Face to Face? Since *the Heavens muſt receive him, until the Times of Reſtitution of all Things*; let them alſo receive our Hearts with him. There alſo is *new Jeruſalem, which is the Mother of us all* (g). And there are Multitudes of our elder Brethren. There are our Friends and old Acquaintance, whoſe Society in the Fleſh we ſo much delighted in, and whoſe Departure hence we ſo much lamented; and is this no Attractive to thy Thoughts? If they were within thy Reach on Earth, thou wouldſt go and viſit them, and why not oftner viſit them in Spirit, and rejoice before Hand to think of meeting them there? " *Socrates* rejoiced that he " ſhould die, becauſe he *believed* he ſhould ſee *Homer*, " *Heſiod*, and other eminent Perſons. How much " more do I rejoice, ſaid a pious old Miniſter, who " am *ſure* to ſee Chriſt my Saviour, the eternal Son " of God, in his aſſumed Fleſh; beſides ſo many " wiſe, holy and renowned Patriarchs, Prophets, " Apoſtles, *&c.*" A Believer ſhould look to Heaven, and contemplate the bleſſed State of the Saints, and think with himſelf, " Though I am not yet ſo " happy

(g) Gal. iv. 26.

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" happy as to be with you, yet this is my daily Com-
" fort, you are my Brethren and Fellow-Members
" in Chriſt, and therefore your Joys are my Joys,
" and your Glory by this near Relation is my Glory;
" eſpecially while I believe in the ſame Chriſt, and
" hold faſt the ſame Faith and Obedience, by which
" you were thus dignified, and rejoice in Spirit with
" you, and congratulate your Happineſs in my daily
" Meditations."

§ 17. MOREOVER, *our Houſe and Home* is above. *For we know, that if our earthly Houſe of this Tabernacle were diſſolved, we have a Building of God, an Houſe not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens.* Why do we then look no oftener towards it, and *groan earneſtly, deſiring to be cloathed upon with our Houſe which is from Heaven* (h)? If our Home were far meaner, ſure we ſhould remember it, becauſe it is our Home. If you were but baniſhed into a ſtrange Land, how frequently would your Thoughts be at Home. And why is it not thus with us in Reſpect of Heaven? Is not *that* more truly and properly our Home, where we muſt take up our everlaſting Abode, than *this*, which we are every Hour expecting to be ſeparated from, and to ſee no more? We are Strangers, and *that* is our Country. We are Heirs, and *that* is our Inheritance; even *an Inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reſerved in Heaven for us* (i). We are here in continual Diſtreſs, and Want, and there lies our Subſtance; even *a better and an enduring Subſtance* (k). Yea, the very Hope of our Souls is there; all our Hope of Relief from our Diſtreſſes; all our Hope of Happineſs, when here we are miſerable; all this *Hope is laid up for us in Heaven* (l). Why, *beloved Chriſtians*,

(h) 2 Cor. v. 1, 2. (i) 1 Pet. i. 4.
(k) Heb. x. 34. (l) Col. i. 5.

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ans, have we ſo much Intereſt, and ſo few Thoughts there? So near Relation, and ſo little Affection? Doth it become us to be delighted in the Company of Strangers, ſo as to forget our Father, and our Lord? Or to be ſo well pleaſed with thoſe that hate and grieve us, as to forget our beſt and deareſt Friends? Or to be ſo fond of borrowed Trifles, as to forget our own Poſſeſſion and Treaſure? Or to be ſo much impreſſed with Tears and Wants, as to forget our eternal Joy and Reſt? God uſually pleads his Propriety in us; and thence concludes He will do us Good, even becauſe we are his own People, whom He hath choſen out of all the World: Why then do we not plead our Intereſt in Him, and ſo raiſe our Hearts above; even becauſe He is our own God, and becauſe the Place is our own Poſſeſſion? Men commonly over-love and over-value their own Things, and mind them too much. O that we could mind our own Inheritance, and value it half as much as it deſerves!

§ 18. (12) *Once more conſider, there is nothing, but Heaven, worth ſetting our Hearts upon.* If God have them not, who ſhall? If thou mind not thy Reſt, what wilt thou mind? Haſt thou found out ſome other God? Or ſomething that will ſerve thee inſtead of Reſt? Haſt thou found on Earth an eternal Happineſs? Where is it? What is it made of? Who was the Man that found it out? Who was he that laſt enjoyed it? Where dwelt he? What was his Name? Or art thou the firſt that ever diſcovered Heaven on Earth? Ah Wretch! truſt not to thy Diſcoveries, boaſt not of thy Gain, till Experience bid thee boaſt. Diſquiet not thyſelf, in looking for that which is not on Earth; leſt thou learn thy Experience with the Loſs of thy Soul, which thou mighteſt have learned on eaſier Terms; even by the Warnings of God in his Word, and the Loſs of thouſands of Souls before thee.

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If Satan should *take thee up to the Mountain* of Temptation, *and shew thee all the Kingdoms of the World, and the Glory of them*; he could shew thee nothing that is worthy thy Thoughts, much less to be preferred before thy Rest. Indeed, so far as Duty and Necessity require it, we must be content to mind the Things below; but who is he that contains himself within the Compass of those Limits? And yet if we ever so diligently contract our Cares and Thoughts, we shall find the least to be bitter and burthensome. *Christian*, see the Emptiness of all these Things, and the Preciousness of the Things above. If thy Thoughts should, like the laborious Bee, go over the World from Flower to Flower, from Creature to Creature, they would bring no Honey or Sweetness home, save what they gathered from their Relations to Eternity. Though every Truth of God is precious, and ought to be defended; yet even all our *Study of Truth* should be still in Reference to our Rest: For the Observation is too true, *that the Lovers of Controversies in Religion, have never been warmed with one Spark of the Love of God.* And as for minding the *Affairs of Church and State*; so far as they illustrate the Providence of God, and tend to the settling of the Gospel, and the Government of Christ, and consequently to the saving our own Souls, and those of our Posterity, they are well-worth our diligent Observation; but these are only their Relations to Eternity. Even all our Dealings in the World, our Buying and Selling, our Eating and Drinking, our Building and Marrying, our Peace and War, so far as they relate not to the Life to come, but tend only to the pleasing of the Flesh, are not worthy the frequent Thoughts of a Christian. And now doth not thy Conscience say, that there is nothing but Heaven, and the Way to it, that is worth thy minding?

§ 19.

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§ 19. Now, *Reader*, are theſe Conſiderations weighty, or not? Have I proved it thy Duty to keep thy Heart on Things above, or have I not? If thou ſay, not; I am confident thou contradicteſt thy own Conſcience. If thou acknowledge thyſelf convinced of the Duty; that very Tongue of thine ſhall condemn thee, and that Confeſſion be pleaded againſt thee, if thou wilfully neglecteſt ſuch a confeſſed Duty. Be thoroughly willing, and the Work is more than half done. I have now a few plain Directions to give you for your Help in this great Work; but, alas! it is in vain to mention them, except you be willing to put them in Practice. However, I will propoſe them to thee, and may the Lord perſuade thy Heart to the Work!

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CHAP. XII.

Directions how to live a heavenly Life upon Earth.

§ 1. (I) *Hinderances to a heavenly Life must be avoided; such as,* § 2. (1) *living in any known Sin;* § 3. (2) *an earthly Mind;* § 4. (3) *ungodly Companions;* § 5. (4) *a notional Religion;* § 6. (5) *a haughty Spirit;* § 7. (6) *a slothful Spirit;* § 8. *and* (7) *resting in Preparatives for a heavenly Life, without the Thing itself.*——§ 9. (II) *The Duties which will promote a heavenly Life are these;* § 10. (1) *Be convinced that Heaven is the only Treasure and Happiness;* § 11, 12. (2) *labour to know your Interest in it;* § 13. (3) *and how near it is;* § 14. (4) *frequently and seriously talk of it;* § 15. (5) *endeavour in every Duty to raise your Affections nearer to it;* § 16. (6) *to the same Purpose improve every Object and Event;* § 17, 18. (7) *be much in the angelical Work of Praise;* § 19. (8) *possess your Souls with believing Thoughts of the infinite Love of God;* § 20. (9) *carefully observe and cherish the Motions of the Spirit of God;* § 21. (10) *nor even neglect the due Care of your bodily Health.*

§ 1. AS thou valuest the Comforts of a heavenly Converſation, I must here charge thee from God,——to *avoid carefully some dangerous Hinderances;* and then——*faithfully and diligently to practice such Duties as will especially assist thee in attaining to a heavenly*

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venly Life. And (1) the *Hinderances to be avoided* with all possible Care, are,——*living in any known Sin*,——*an earthly Mind*,——*the Company of the Ungodly*,——*a notional Religion*,——*a proud and lofty Spirit*,——*a slothful Spirit*,——and *resting in mere Preparations for this heavenly Life, without any Acquaintance with the Thing itself.*

§ 2. (1) *Living in any known Sin, is a grand Impediment to a heavenly Conversation.* What Havock will this make in thy Soul! O the Joys that this hath destroyed! The Ruin it hath made amongst Men's Graces! The Soul-strengthening Duties it hath hindered! *Christian Reader*, art thou one that hast used Violence with thy Conscience? Art thou a wilful Neglecter of known Duties, either publick, private, or secret? Art thou a Slave to thine Appetite, or to any other commanding Sense? Art thou a proud Seeker of thine own Esteem? Art thou a peevish and passionate Person, ready to take Fire at every Word, or Look, or supposed Slight? Art thou a Deceiver of others in thy Dealings, or one that *will be rich*, right or wrong? If this be thy Case, I dare say, Heaven and thy Soul are very great Strangers. These *Beams in thine Eyes* will not suffer thee to look to *Heaven*; they will be *a Cloud between thee and thy God.* When thou dost but attempt to study Eternity, and gather Comforts from the Life to come, thy Sin will presently look thee in the Face, and say, "These Things be-"long not to thee. How shouldst thou take Comfort "from Heaven, who takest so much Pleasure in the "Lusts of the Flesh?" How will this damp thy Joys, and make the Thoughts of that Day, and State, become thy Trouble, and not thy Delight! Every wilful Sin will be to thy Comforts, as Water to the Fire; when thou thinkest to quicken them, this will quench them. It will utterly indispose and

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diſable thee, that thou canſt no more aſcend in divine Meditation, than a Bird can fly when its Wings are clip'd. Sin cuts the very Sinews of this heavenly Life. O *Man!* what a Life doſt thou loſe? What daily Delights doſt thou ſell for a vile Luſt? If Heaven and Hell can meet together, and God become a Lover of Sin, then mayſt thou live in thy Sin, and in the Taſtes of Glory; and have a Converſation in Heaven, though thou cheriſh thy Corruption. And take heed, leſt it baniſh thee from Heaven, as it does thy Heart. And though thou be not guilty, and knoweſt no reigning Sin in thy Soul, think what a ſad Thing it would be, if ever this ſhould prove thy Caſe. Watch therefore; eſpecially reſolve to keep from the Occaſions of Sin, and out of the Way of Temptations. What need have we daily to pray, *Lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil?*

§ 3. (2) *An earthly Mind is another Hinderance to be carefully avoided. God and Mammon*, Earth and Heaven, cannot both have the Delight of thy Heart. When the heavenly Believer is bleſſing himſelf in his God, and *rejoicing in Hope* of the Glory to come; perhaps thou art bleſſing thyſelf in thy worldly Proſperity, and rejoicing in Hope of thy thriving here. When he is comforting his Soul in the Views of Chriſt, of Angels and Saints, whom he ſhall live with for ever; then thou art comforting thyſelf with thy Wealth, in looking over thy Bills and Bonds, thy Goods, thy Cattle, or thy Buildings, and in thinking of the Favour of the Great, of the Pleaſure of a plentiful Eſtate, of larger Proviſion for thy Children after thee, of the Advancement of thy Family, or the Increaſe of thy Dependents. If Chriſt pronounced him a Fool, that ſaid, *Soul, take thy Eaſe, thou haſt enough laid up for many Years*; how much more ſo art thou, who knowingly ſpeakeſt in thy Heart the ſame Words?

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Words? Tell me, what Difference between this Fool's Expreſſions, and thy Affections? Remember, thou haſt to do with the Searcher of Hearts. Certainly, ſo much as thou delighteſt, and takeſt up thy Reſt, on Earth, ſo much of thy Delight in God is abated. Thine earthly Mind may conſiſt with thy outward Profeſſion and common Duties; but it cannot conſiſt with this heavenly Duty. Thou thyſelf knoweſt how ſeldom and cold, how curſory and reſerved, thy Thoughts have been of the Joys above, ever ſince thou didſt trade ſo eagerly for the World. O the curſed Madneſs of many that ſeem to be religious! They thruſt themſelves into a Multitude of Employments, till they are loaded with Labours, and clogged with Cares, that their Souls are as unfit to converſe with God, as a Man to walk with a Mountain on his Back; and as unapt to ſoar in Meditation, as their Bodies to leap above the Sun! And when they have loſt that Heaven upon Earth, which they might have had, they take up with a few rotten Arguments to prove it lawful; though indeed they cannot. I adviſe thee, *Chriſtian*, who haſt taſted the Pleaſures of a heavenly Life, as ever thou wouldſt taſte of them any more, avoid this devouring Gulph of an earthly Mind. If once thou come to this, that thou *wilt be rich*, thou *falleſt into Temptation, and a Snare, and into many fooliſh and hurtful Luſts* (a). Keep theſe Things looſe about thee, like thy upper Garments, that thou mayſt lay them by whenever there is need; but let God and Glory be next thy Heart. Ever remember, *that the Friendſhip of the World is Enmity with God. Whoſoever therefore will be a Friend of the World, is the Enemy of God* (b). *Love not the World, neither the Things that are in the World. If any Man love the World, the Love of the Father is not*

(a) 1 Tim. vi. 9. (b) James iv. 4.

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in him (c). This is plain Dealing, and happy he that faithfully receives it!

§ 4. (3) *Beware of the Company of the Ungodly.* Not that I would dissuade thee from necessary Converse, or from doing them any Office of Love; especially, not from endeavouring the Good of their Souls, as long as thou hast any Opportunity or Hope: Nor would I have thee conclude them to be *Dogs* and *Swine*, in order to evade the Duty of Reproof: Nor even to judge them such at all, as long as there is any Hope for the better: Much less can I approve of their Practice, who conclude Men *Dogs* or *Swine*, before ever they faithfully and lovingly admonish them, or perhaps before they have known them, or spoke with them. But it is the unnecessary Society of ungodly Men, and too much Familiarity with unprofitable Companions, that I dissuade you from. Not only the open Prophane, the Swearer, the Drunkard, and the Enemies of Godliness, will prove hurtful Companions to us, though these indeed are chiefly to be avoided; but too frequent Society with Persons merely civil and moral, whose Conversation is empty and unedifying, may much divert our Thoughts from Heaven. Our Backwardness is such, that we need the most constant and powerful Helps. A Stone, or a Clod, is as fit to arise and fly in the Air, as our Hearts are naturally to move toward Heaven. You need not hinder the Rocks from flying up to the Sky; it is sufficient that you do not help them. And surely if our Spirits have not great Assistance, they may easily be kept from soaring upward, though they never should meet with the least Impediment. O think of this in the Choice of your Company! When your Spirits are so disposed for Heaven, that you need no Help to lift them up, but, as Flames, you are always mount-

(c) 1 John ii. 15.

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mounting, and carrying with you all that is in your Way; then you may indeed be leſs careful of your Company; but till then, as you love the Delights of a heavenly Life, be careful herein. What will it advantage thee in a divine Life, to hear how the Market goes, or what the Weather is, or is like to be, or what News is ſtirring? This is the Diſcourſe of earthly Men. What will it conduce to the raiſing thy Heart God-ward, to hear that this is an able Miniſter, or that an eminent Chriſtian, or this an excellent Sermon, or that an excellent Book, or to hear ſome difficult but unimportant Controverſy? Yet this, for the moſt Part, is the ſweeteſt Diſcourſe thou art like to have from a formal, ſpeculative, dead-hearted Profeſſor. Nay, if thou hadſt newly been warming thy Heart in the Contemplation of the bleſſed Joys above, would not this Diſcourſe benumb thy Affections, and quickly freeze thy Heart again? I appeal to the Judgment of any Man that hath tried it, and maketh Obſervations on the Frame of his Spirit. Men cannot well talk of one Thing, and mind another, eſpecially Things of ſuch different Natures. You, *young Men*, who are moſt liable to this Temptation, think ſeriouſly of what I ſay; can you have your Hearts in Heaven, among your roaring Companions in an Alehouſe, or Tavern? Or when you work in your Shops with thoſe, whoſe common Language is Oaths, *Filthineſs, or fooliſh Talking, or Jeſting?* Nay, let me tell you, if you chuſe ſuch Company when you might have better, and find moſt Delight in ſuch, you are ſo far from a heavenly Converſation, that as yet you have no Title to Heaven at all, and in that State ſhall never come there. If your Treaſure was there, your Heart could not be on Things ſo diſtant. In a Word, our Company will be Part of our Happineſs in Heaven, and

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it is a singular Part of our Furtherance to it, or Hinderance from it.

§ 5. (4) *Avoid frequent Disputes about lesser Truths, and a Religion that lies only in Opinions.* They are usually least acquainted with a heavenly Life, who are violent Disputers about the Circumstantials of Religion. He, whose Religion is all in his Opinions, will be most frequently and zealously speaking his Opinions; and he, whose Religion lies in the Knowledge and Love of God and Christ, will be most delightfully speaking of that happy Time when he shall enjoy them. He is a rare and precious Christian, who is skilful to improve well-known Truths. Therefore let me advise you who aspire after a heavenly Life, not to spend too much of your Thoughts, your Time, your Zeal, or your Speech, upon Disputes that less concern your Souls; but when Hypocrites are feeding on Husks, or Shells, do you feed on the Joys above. I wish you were able to defend every Truth of God, and to this End would read and study; but still I would have the chief Truths to be chiefly studied, and none to cast out your Thoughts of Eternity. The least controverted Points are usually most weighty, and of most necessary frequent Use to our Souls. Therefore study well such Scripture-Precepts as these; *him that is weak in the Faith receive ye, but not to doubtful Disputations* (d). *Foolish and unlearned Questions avoid, knowing that they do gender Strifes. And the Servant of the Lord must not strive* (e). *Avoid foolish Questions, and Genealogies, and Contentions, and Strivings about the Law; for they are unprofitable and vain* (f). *If any Man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome Words, even the Words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the Doctrine which is according to Godliness; he is proud, knowing nothing, but*

(d) Rom. xiv. 1. (e) 2 Tim. ii. 23, 24. (f) Tit. iii. 9.

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but doting about Queſtions and Strifes of Words, whereof cometh Envy, Strife, Railings, evil Surmiſings, perverſe Diſputings of Men of corrupt Minds, and deſtitute of the Truth, ſuppoſing that Gain is Godlineſs; from ſuch withdraw thyſelf (g).

§ 6. (5) *Take Heed of a proud and lofty Spirit.* There is ſuch an Antipathy between this Sin and God, that thou wilt never get thy Heart near him, nor get him near thy Heart, as long as this prevaileth in it. If it caſt the Angels out of Heaven, it muſt needs keep thy Heart from Heaven. If it caſt our firſt Parents out of Paradiſe, and ſeparated between the Lord and us, and brought his Curſe on all the Creatures here below; it will certainly keep our Hearts from Paradiſe, and increaſe the curſed Separation from our God. Intercourſe with God will keep Men low, and that Lowlineſs will promote their Intercourſe. When a Man is uſed to be much with God, and taken up in the Study of his glorious Attributes, he *abhors himſelf in Duſt and Aſhes*; and that Self-Abhorrence is his beſt Preparative to obtain Admittance to God again. Therefore after a Soul-humbling Day, or in Times of Trouble, when the Soul is loweſt, it uſeth to have freeſt Acceſs to God, and favour moſt of the Life above. The Delight of God is in *him that is poor, and of a contrite Spirit, and trembleth at his Word* (h); and the Delight of ſuch a Soul is in God; and where there is mutual Delight, there will be freeſt Admittance, heartieſt Welcome, and moſt frequent Converſe. But God is ſo far from dwelling in the Soul that is proud, that He will not admit it to any near Acceſs; *the Proud He knoweth afar off* (i); *God reſiſteth the Proud, and giveth Grace to the Humble* (k). A proud Mind is high in Conceit,

(g) 1 Tim. vi. 3--5.
(h) Iſai. lxvi. 2.
(i) Pſ. cxxxviii. 6.
(k) 1 Pet. v. 5.

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ceit, Self-Esteem, and carnal Aspiring; a humble Mind is high indeed in God's Esteem, and in holy Aspiring. These two Sorts of High-mindedness are most of all opposite to each other, as we see most Wars are between Princes and Princes, and not between a Prince and a Plowman. Well then, art thou a Man of Worth in thy own Eyes? Art thou delighted when thou hearest of thy Esteem with Men, and much dejected when thou hearest that they slight thee? Dost thou love those best that honour thee, and think meanly of them that do not, though they be otherwise Men of Godliness and Honesty? Must thou have thy Humours fulfilled, and thy Judgment be a Rule, and thy Word a Law to all about thee? Are thy Passions kindled, if thy Word or Will be crossed? Art thou ready to judge Humility to be fordid Baseness, and knowest not how to submit to humble Confession, when thou hast sinned against God, or injured thy Brother? Art thou one that lookest strange at the godly Poor, and art almost ashamed to be their Companion? Canst thou not serve God in a low Place, as well as a high? Are thy Boastings restrained more by Prudence or Artifice than Humility? Dost thou desire to have all Men's Eyes upon thee, and to hear them say, *This is he?* Art thou unacquainted with the Deceitfulness and Wickedness of thy Heart? Art thou more ready to defend thy Innocence, than accuse thyself, or confess thy Fault? Canst thou hardly bear a close Reproof, or digest plain Dealing? If these Symptoms be undeniably in thy Heart, thou art a proud Person. There is too much of Hell abiding in thee, to have any Acquaintance with Heaven; thy Soul is too like the Devil, to have any Familiarity with God. A proud Man makes himself his God, and sets up himself as his Idol; how then can his Affections be set on God?

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How can he possibly have his Heart in Heaven? Invention and Memory may possibly furnish his Tongue with humble and heavenly Expressions, but in his Spirit there is no more Heaven than there is Humility. I speak the more of it, because it is the most common and dangerous Sin in Morality, and most promotes the great Sin of Infidelity. O *Christian!* if thou wouldst live continually in the Presence of thy Lord, lie in the Dust, and He will thence take thee up. *Learn of Him* to be *meek and lowly, and thou shalt find Rest unto thy Soul* (l). Otherwise thy Soul will be *like the troubled Sea, when it cannot rest, whose Waters cast up Mire and Dirt* (m); and instead of these sweet Delights in God, thy Pride will fill thee with perpetual Disquiet. As he *that humbleth himself as a little Child*, shall hereafter *be greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven* (n); so shall he now be greatest in the Foretastes of that Kingdom. God *dwells with a contrite and humble Spirit, to revive the Spirit of the humble, and to revive the Heart of the contrite ones* (o). Therefore *humble yourselves in the Sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up* (p). And *when others are cast down, then thou shalt say, there is lifting up, and He shall save the humble Person* (q).

§ 7. (6) *A slothful Spirit is another Impediment to this heavenly Life.* And I verily think, there is nothing hinders it more than this in Men of a good Understanding. If it were only the Exercise of the Body, the moving of the Lips, the bending of the Knee; Men would as commonly step to Heaven, as they go to visit a Friend. But to separate our Thoughts and Affections from the World, to draw forth all our Graces, and increase each in its proper Object, and hold them to it till the Work prospers in our Hands;

(l) Matt. xi. 29. (m) Is. lvii. 20. (n) Matt. xviii. 4.
(o) Is. lvii. 15. (p) James iv. 10. (q) Job xxii. 29.

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this, this is the Difficulty. *Reader*, Heaven is above thee, and doſt thou think to travel this ſteep Aſcent without Labour and Reſolution? Canſt thou get that earthly Heart to Heaven, and bring that backward Mind to God, while thou lieſt ſtill, and takeſt thine Eaſe? If lying down at the Foot of the Hill, and looking toward the Top, and wiſhing we were there, would ſerve the Turn, then we ſhould have daily Travellers for Heaven. But *the Kingdom of Heaven ſuffereth Violence, and the Violent take it by Force* (r). There muſt be Violence uſed to get theſe firſt Fruits, as well as to get the full Poſſeſſion. Doſt thou not feel it ſo, though I ſhould not tell thee? Will thy Heart get upwards, except thou drive it? Thou knoweſt that Heaven is all thy Hopes, that nothing below can yield thee Reſt, that a Heart, ſeldom thinking of Heaven, can fetch but little Comfort thence; and yet doſt thou not loſe thy Opportunities, and lie below, when thou ſhouldſt walk above, and live with God? Doſt thou not commend the Sweetneſs of a heavenly Life, and judge thoſe the beſt Chriſtians that uſe it, and yet never try it thyſelf? As the Sluggard that ſtretches himſelf on his Bed, and cries, O that this were working! So doſt thou talk, and trifle, and live at thy Eaſe, and ſay, O that I could get my Heart to Heaven! How many read Books, and hear Sermons, expecting to hear of ſome eaſier Way, or to meet with a ſhorter Courſe to Comfort, than they are ever like to find in Scripture? Or they aſk for Directions for a heavenly Life, and if the hearing them will ſerve, they will be heavenly Chriſtians; but if we ſhew them their Work, and tell them, they cannot have theſe Delights on eaſier Terms, then they leave us, as *the young Man* left Chriſt, *ſorrowful*. If thou art convinced, *Reader*, that

(r) Matt. xi. 12.

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that this Work is neceſſary to thy Comfort, ſet upon it reſolutely: If thy Heart draw back, force it on with the Command of Reaſon: If thy Reaſon begin to diſpute, produce the Command of God, and urge thy own Neceſſity, with the other Conſiderations ſuggeſted in the former Chapter. Let not ſuch an incomparable Treaſure lie before thee, with thy Hand in thy Boſom; nor thy Life be a continual Vexation, when it might be a continual Feaſt, only becauſe thou wilt not exert thyſelf. Sit not ſtill with a diſconſolate Spirit, while Comforts grow before thine Eyes, like a Man in the Midſt of a Garden of Flowers, that will not riſe to get them, and partake of their Sweetneſs. This I know, Chriſt is the Fountain: But the Well is deep, and thou muſt get forth this Water before thou canſt be refreſhed with it. I know, ſo far as you are ſpiritual, you need not all this Striving and Violence; but in Part you are carnal, and as long as it is ſo, there is need of Labour. It was a Cuſtom of the *Parthians*, not to give their Children any Meat in the Morning, before they ſaw the Sweat on their Faces with ſome Labour. And you ſhall find this to be God's uſual Courſe, not to give his Children the Taſte of his Delights, till they begin to ſweat in ſeeking after them. Judge, therefore, whether a heavenly Life, or thy carnal Eaſe, be better; and, as a wiſe Man, make thy Choice accordingly. Yet let me add for thy Encouragement, *Thou needeſt not employ thy Thoughts more than thou now doſt; it is only to fix them upon better and more pleaſant Objects.* Employ but as many ſerious Thoughts every Day upon the excellent Glory of the Life to come, as thou now doſt on worldly Affairs, yea, on Vanities and Impertinencies, and thy Heart will ſoon be at Heaven. On the whole, it is *the Field of the Slothful*, that is *all grown over with Thorns and Nettles*:

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Nettles; and *the Desire of the Slothful killeth his* Joys, *for his Hands refuse to labour*; and it is *the slothful Man saith, there is a Lion in the Way, a Lion is in the Streets. As the Door turneth upon his Hinges, so doth the Slothful upon his Bed. The Slothful hideth his Hand in his Bosom, it grieveth him to bring it again to his Mouth* (s), though it be to feed himself with the Food of Life. What is this but throwing away our own Consolations, and consequently the precious Blood that bought them? For *he that is slothful in his Work, is Brother to him that is a great Waster* (t). Apply this to thy spiritual Work, and study well the Meaning of it.

§ 8. (7) *Contentment with the mere Preparatives to this heavenly Life, while we are utter Strangers to the Life itself, is also a dangerous and secret Hinderance.* When we take up with the mere Study of heavenly Things, and the Notions of them, or the Talking with one another about them; as if this were enough to make us heavenly. None are in more Danger of this Snare, than those that are employed in leading the Devotions of others, especially Preachers of the Gospel. O how easily may such be deceived! While they do nothing so much as read, and study of Heaven; preach, and pray, and talk of Heaven; is not this the heavenly Life? Alas! all this is but mere Preparation: This is but collecting the Materials, not erecting the Building itself: It is but gathering the Manna for others, and not eating and digesting ourselves. As he that sits at home may draw exact Maps of Countries, and yet never see them, nor travel toward them; so may you describe to others the Joys of Heaven, and yet never come near it in your own Hearts. A blind Man, by Learning, may dispute of Light and Colours; so may you set forth to

(s) Prov. xxiv. 30, 31. xxi. 25. xxvi. 13--15. (t) Prov. xviii. 9.

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to others that heavenly Light, which never enlightened your own Souls, and bring that Fire for the Hearts of your People, which never warmed your own Hearts. What heavenly Paſſages had *Balaam* in his Prophecies, yet how little of it in his Spirit? Nay, we are under a more ſubtle Temptation, than any other Men, to draw us from this heavenly Life. Studying and preaching of Heaven more reſembles a heavenly Life, than thinking and talking of the World does; and the Reſemblance is apt to deceive us. This is to die the moſt miſerable Death, even to famiſh ourſelves, becauſe we have Bread on our Tables; and to die for Thirſt, while we draw Water for others, thinking it enough that we have daily to do with it, though we never drink for the Refreſhment of our own Souls.

§ 9. (11) HAVING thus ſhewed thee what Hinderances will reſiſt thee in the Work, I expect that thou reſolve againſt them, conſider them ſeriouſly, and avoid them faithfully, or elſe thy Labour will be in vain. I muſt alſo tell thee, that I here expect thy Promiſe, as thou valueſt the Delights of theſe Foretaſtes of Heaven, to *make Conſcience of performing the following Duties*; the reading of which, without their conſtant Practice, will not bring Heaven into thy Heart. Particularly,——*be convinced that Heaven is the only Treaſure and Happineſs*;——*labour to know that it is thy own*;——and *how near it is*;——*frequently and ſeriouſly talk of it*;——*endeavour to raiſe thy Affections nearer to it in every Duty*;——*to the ſame Purpoſe improve every Object and Event*;——*be much in the angelical Work of Praiſe*;——*poſſeſs thy Soul with believing Thoughts of the infinite Love of God*;——*carefully obſerve and cheriſh the Motions of the Spirit of God*;——*nor* even *neglect the due Care of thy bodily Health.*

§ 10.

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§ 10. (1) *Be convinced that Heaven is the only Treasure and Happiness, and labour to know what a Treasure and Happiness it is.* If thou do not believe it to be the chief Good, thou wilt never set thy Heart upon it; and this Conviction must sink into thy Affections; for if it be only a Notion, it will have little Efficacy. If *Eve* once supposes she sees more Worth in the forbidden Fruit, than in the Love and Enjoyment of God, no Wonder if it have more of her Heart than God. If your Judgment once prefers the Delights of the Flesh, before the Delights in the Presence of God, it is impossible your Heart should be in Heaven. As it is Ignorance of the Emptiness of Things below, that makes Men so over value them; so it is Ignorance of the high Delights above, which is the Cause that Men so little mind them. If you see a Purse of Gold, and believe it to be but Counters, it will not entice your Affections to it. It is not the real Excellence of a Thing itself, but its known Excellence, that excites Desire. If an ignorant Man see a Book containing the Secrets of Arts or Sciences, he values it no more than a common Piece, because he knows not what is in it; but he that knows it, highly values it, and can even forbear his Meat, Drink, and Sleep to read it. As the *Jews* killed the *Messiah*, while they waited for him, because they did not know him; so the World cries out for Rest, and busily seeks for Delight and Happiness, because they know it not; for did they thoroughly know what it is, they could not so slight the everlasting Treasure.

§ 11. (2) *Labour also to know that Heaven is thy own Happiness.* We may confess Heaven to be the best Condition, though we despair of enjoying it; and we may desire and seek it, if we see the Attainment but probable; but we can never delightfully rejoice in it, till we are in some measure persuaded of our

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our Title to it. What Comfort is it to a Man that is naked, to see the rich Attire of others? What Delight is it for a Man that hath not a House to put his Head in, to see the sumptuous Buildings of others? Would not all this rather increase his Anguish, and make him more sensible of his own Misery? So for a Man to know the Excellencies of Heaven, and not know whether ever he shall enjoy them, may raise Desire, and urge Pursuit, but he will have little Joy. Who will set his Heart on another Man's Possessions? If your Houses, your Goods, your Cattle, your Children, were not your own, you would less mind them, and less delight in them. O *Christian!* rest not therefore, till you can call this Rest your own: Bring thy Heart to the Bar of Trial: Set the Qualifications of the Saints on one Side, and of thy Soul on the other, and then judge how near they resemble. Thou hast the same Word to judge thyself by now, as thou must be judged by at the great Day. Mistake not the Scripture's Description of a Saint, that thou neither acquit, nor condemn thyself upon Mistakes. For as groundless Hopes tend to Confusion, and are the greatest Cause of most Men's Damnation; so groundless Doubts tend to, and are the great Cause of, the Saints Perplexity and Distress. Therefore lay thy Foundation for Trial safely, and proceed in the Work deliberately, and resolutely, nor give over till thou canst say, either thou hast, or hast not yet, a Title to this Rest. O! if Men did truly know, that God is their own Father, and Christ their own Redeemer and Head, and that those are their own everlasting Habitations, and that there they must abide and be happy for ever; how could they chuse but be transported with the Fore-Thoughts thereof? If a Christian could but look upon Sun, Moon, and Stars, and reckon all his own in Christ, and say, "These are the Bless-

"sings

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" ſings that my Lord hath procured me, and Things " incomparably greater than theſe;" what holy Raptures would his Spirit feel?

§ 12. THE more do they ſin againſt their own Comforts, as well as againſt the Grace of the Goſpel, who plead for their Unbelief, and cheriſh diſtruſtful Thoughts of God, and injurious Thoughts of their Redeemer; who repreſent the Covenant, as if it were of Works, and not of Grace; and Chriſt as an Enemy, rather than a Saviour; as if he were willing they ſhould die in their Unbelief, when he hath invited them ſo often, and ſo affectionately, and ſuffered the Agonies that they ſhould ſuffer. Wretches that we are! to be keeping up Jealouſies of our Lord, when we ſhould be rejoicing in his Love. As if any Man could chuſe Chriſt, before Chriſt hath choſen him; or any Man were more willing to be happy, than Chriſt is to make him happy. Away with theſe injurious, if not blaſphemous, Thoughts! If ever thou haſt harboured ſuch Thoughts in thy Breaſt, caſt them from thee, and take Heed how thou ever entertaineſt them more. God hath written the Names of his People in Heaven, as you uſe to write your Names, or Marks, on your Goods; and ſhall we be attempting to raſe them out, and to write our Names on the Doors of Hell? But bleſſed be *God, whoſe Foundation ſtandeth ſure* (u); and who *keepeth us by his Power thro' Faith unto Salvation* (w).

§ 13. (3) *Labour to apprehend how near thy Reſt is.* What we think near at Hand, we are more ſenſible of, than that which we behold at a Diſtance. When Judgments or Mercies are far off, we talk of them with little Concern; but when they draw cloſe to us, we tremble at, or rejoice in, them. This makes Men think on Heaven ſo inſenſibly, becauſe they conceit

(u) 2 Tim. ii. 19. (w) 1 Pet. i. 5.

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conceit it at too great a Diſtance; they look on it as twenty, thirty, or forty Years off. How much better were it to receive *the Sentence of Death in ourſelves* (x), and to look on Eternity as near at Hand? While I am thinking, and writing, of it, it haſteth near, and I am even entering into it before I am aware. While thou art reading this, whoever thou art, Time poſteth on, and thy Life will be gone, *as a Tale that is told.* If you verily believed you ſhould die To-morrow, how ſeriouſly would you think of Heaven To-night? When *Samuel* had told *Saul*, *To-morrow ſhalt thou be with me*; this ſtruck him to the Heart. And if Chriſt ſhould ſay to a believing Soul, To-morrow ſhalt thou be with me; this would bring him in Spirit to Heaven before Hand. Do but ſuppoſe that you are ſtill entering into Heaven, and it will greatly help you more ſeriouſly to mind it.

§ 14. (4) *Let thy eternal Reſt be the Subject of thy frequent ſerious Diſcourſe*; eſpecially with thoſe that can ſpeak from their Hearts, and are ſeaſoned themſelves with a heavenly Nature. It is Pity Chriſtians ſhould ever meet together, without ſome Talk of their meeting in Heaven, or of the Way to it, before they part: It is Pity ſo much Time is ſpent in vain Converſation, and uſeleſs Diſputes, and not a ſerious Word of Heaven among them. Methinks we ſhould meet together on purpoſe, to warm our Spirits with diſcourſing of our Reſt. To hear a Chriſtian ſet forth that bleſſed, glorious State, with Life and Power, from the Promiſes of the Goſpel; methinks ſhould make us ſay, *Did not our Hearts burn within us, while he opened to us the Scriptures* (y)? If a *Felix* will *tremble*, when he hears his Judgment powerfully repreſented, why ſhould not the Believer be revived, when he hears his eternal Reſt deſcribed? Wicked Men

(x) 2 Cor. i. 9. (y) Luke xxiv. 32.

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Men can be delighted in talking together of their Wickedneſs; and ſhould not Chriſtians then be delighted in talking of Chriſt? and the Heirs of Heaven in talking of their Inheritance? This may make our Hearts revive, as it did *Jacob*'s to hear the Meſſage that called him to *Goſhen*, and to ſee the Chariots that ſhould bring him to *Joſeph*. O that we were furniſhed with Skill and Reſolution, to turn the Stream of Men's common Diſcourſe to theſe more ſublime and precious Things! And when Men begin to talk of Things unprofitable, that we could tell how to put in a Word for Heaven, and ſay, as *Peter* of his bodily Food, *Not ſo, for I have never eaten any Thing that is common or unclean!* O the Good that we might both do and receive by this Courſe! Had it not been to deter us from unprofitable Converſation, Chriſt would not have talked of our *giving an Account of every idle Word in the Day of Judgment* (z). Say then, as the Pſalmiſt, when you are in Company, *Let my Tongue cleave to the Roof of my Mouth, if I prefer not Jeruſalem above my chief Joy* (a). Then you ſhall find it true, that *a wholeſome Tongue is a Tree of Life* (b).

§ 15. (5) *Endeavour in every Duty to raiſe thy Affections nearer to Heaven.* God's End in the Inſtitution of his Ordinances was, that they ſhould be as ſo many Steps to advance us to our Reſt, and by which, in Subordination to Chriſt, we might daily aſcend in our Affections. Let this be thy End in uſing them, and doubtleſs they will not be unſucceſsful. How have you been rejoiced by a few Lines from a Friend, when you could not ſee him Face to Face? And may we not have Intercourſe with God in his Ordinances, though our Perſons be yet ſo far remote? May not our Spirits rejoice in reading thoſe Lines,

(z) Matt. xii. 36. (a) Pſ. cxxvii. 6. (b) Prov. xv. 4.

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Lines, which contain our Legacy and Charter for Heaven? With what Gladneſs and Triumph may we read the Expreſſions of divine Love, and hear of our celeſtial Country, though we have not yet the Happineſs to behold it? Men that are ſeparated by Sea and Land, can by Letters carry on great and gainful Trades; and may not a Chriſtian, in the wiſe Improvement of Duties, drive on this happy Trade for Reſt? Come then, renounce Formality, Cuſtom, and Applauſe, and kneel down in ſecret or publick Prayer, with Hope to get thy Heart nearer to God before thou riſeſt up. When thou openeſt thy Bible, or other Book, hope to meet with ſome Paſſage of divine Truth, and ſuch Bleſſing of the Spirit with it, as will give thee a fuller Taſte of Heaven. When thou art going to the Houſe of God, ſay, "I hope to meet with ſomewhat from God to "raiſe my Affections, before I return; I hope the "Spirit will give me the Meeting, and ſweeten my "Heart with thoſe celeſtial Delights; I hope Chriſt "will *appear to me in that Way, and ſhine about me* "*with Light from Heaven*, let me hear his inſtructing "and reviving Voice, and cauſe the *Scales to fall* "*from my Eyes*, that I may ſee more of that Glory "than I ever yet ſaw. I hope, before I return, my "Lord will bring my Heart within the View of "Reſt, and ſet it before his Father's Preſence, that "I may return, as *the Shepherds* from the heavenly "Viſion, *glorifying and praiſing God for all the Things* "*I have heard and ſeen.*" When the *Indians* firſt ſaw that the *Engliſh* could converſe together by Letters, they thought there was ſome Spirit incloſed in them. So would By-ſtanders admire, when Chriſtians have Communion with God in Duties, what there is in thoſe Scriptures, in that Sermon, in this Prayer, that fills their Hearts ſo full of Joy, and ſo tranſports them

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them above themselves. Certainly God would not fail us in our Duties, if we did not fail ourselves. Remember, therefore, always to pray for your Minister, that God would put some divine Message into his Mouth, which may leave a heavenly Relish on your Spirit.

§ 16. (6) *Improve every Object, and every Event, to mind thy Soul of its approaching Rest.* As all Providences and Creatures are Means to our Rest, so they point us to that, as their End. God's sweetest Dealings with us at the present, would not be half so sweet as they are, if they did not intimate some further Sweetness. Thou takest but the bare Earnest, and overlookest the main Sum, when thou receivest thy Mercies, and forgettest thy Crown. O that Christians were skilful in this Art! You can open your Bibles; learn to open the Volumes of Creatures and Providences, to read there also of God and Glory. Thus we might have a fuller Taste of Christ and Heaven in every common Meal, than most Men have in a Sacrament. If thou prosper in the World, let it make thee more sensible of thy perpetual Prosperity. If thou art weary with Labour, let it make the Thoughts of thy eternal Rest more sweet. If Things go cross, let thy Desires be more earnest to have Sorrows and Sufferings for ever cease. Is thy Body refreshed with Food, or Sleep? remember the unconceivable Refreshment with Christ. Dost thou hear any good News? remember what glad Tidings it will be to hear *the Trump of God*, and the applauding Sentence of Christ. Art thou delighted with the Society of the Saints? remember what the perfect Society in Heaven will be. Is God communicating Himself to thy Spirit? remember the Time of thy highest Advancement, when both thy Communion and Joy shall be full. Dost thou hear the raging Noise

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Noiſe of the Wicked, and the Confuſions of the World? think of the bleſſed Harmony in Heaven. Doſt thou hear the Tempeſt of War? remember the Day, when thou ſhalt be in perfect Peace, under the Wings of the Prince of Peace for ever. Thus every Condition, and Creature, affords us Advantages for a heavenly Life, if we had but Hearts to improve them.

§ 17. (7) *Be much in the angelical Work of Praiſe.* The more heavenly the Employment, the more will it make the Spirit heavenly. Praiſing God is the Work of Angels and Saints in Heaven, and will be our own everlaſting Work; and if we were more in it now, we ſhould be liker to what we ſhall be then. As Deſire, Faith, and Hope, are of ſhorter Continuance than Love and Joy; ſo alſo Preaching, Prayer, and Sacraments, and all Means for expreſſing and confirming our Faith and Hope, ſhall ceaſe, when our triumphant Expreſſions of Love and Joy ſhall abide for ever. *The livelieſt Emblem of Heaven that I know upon Earth, is, when the People of God, in the deep Senſe of his Excellency and Bounty, from Hearts abounding with Love and Joy, join together both in Heart and Voice, in the chearful and melodious ſinging of his Praiſes.* Theſe Delights, like the Teſtimony of the Spirit, witneſs themſelves to be of God, and bring the Evidence of their heavenly Parentage along with them.

§ 18. LITTLE do we know how we wrong ourſelves, by ſhutting out of our Prayers the Praiſes of God, or allowing them ſo narrow a Room as we uſually do, while we are copious enough in our Confeſſions and Petitions. *Reader*, I intreat thee, remember this; let Praiſes have a larger Room in thy Duties; keep Matter ready at Hand to feed thy Praiſe, as well as Matter for Confeſſion and Petition.

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To this End, ſtudy the Excellencies and Goodneſs of the Lord, as frequently as thy own Wants and Unworthineſs; the Mercies thou haſt received, and thoſe which are promiſed, as often as the Sins thou haſt committed. *Praiſe is comely for the Upright. Whoſo offereth Praiſe, glorifieth God. Praiſe ye the Lord, for the Lord is good; ſing Praiſes unto his Name, for it is pleaſant* (c). *Let us offer the Sacrifice of Praiſe to God continually, that is, the Fruit of our Lips, giving Thanks to his Name* (d). Had not *David* a moſt heavenly Spirit, who was ſo much in this heavenly Work? Doth it not ſometimes raiſe our Hearts, when we only read *the Song of Moſes*, and *the Pſalms of David?* How much more would it raiſe and refreſh us, to be ſkilful and frequent in the Work ourſelves? O the Madneſs of Youth, that lay out their Vigour of Body and Mind upon vain Delights and fleſhly Luſts, which is ſo fit for the nobleſt Work of Man! And O the ſinful Folly of many of the Saints, who drench their Spirits in continual Sadneſs, and waſte their Days in Complaints and Groans, and ſo make themſelves, both in Body and Mind, unfit for this ſweet and heavenly Work! Inſtead of joining with the People of God in his Praiſes, they are queſtioning their Worthineſs, and ſtudying their Miſeries; and ſo rob God of his Glory, and themſelves of their Conſolation. But the greateſt Deſtroyer of our Comfort in this Duty, is our taking up with the Tune and Melody, and ſuffering the Heart to be idle, which ought to perform the principal Part of the Work, and uſe the Melody to revive and exhilarate itſelf.

§ 19. (8) *Ever keep thy Soul poſſeſſed with believing Thoughts of the infinite Love of God.* Love is the Attractive of Love. Few ſo vile, but will love thoſe that love them. No Doubt it is the Death of our heavenly

(c) Pſ. xxxiii. 1. l. 23. cxxxv. 3. (d) Heb. xiii. 15.

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heavenly Life, to have hard Thoughts of God, to conceive of Him as one that would rather damn, than save us. This is to put the bleſſed God into the Similitude of Satan. When our Ignorance and Unbelief have drawn the moſt deformed Picture of God in our Imaginations, then we complain, that we cannot love Him, nor delight in Him. This is the Caſe of many thouſand Chriſtians. Alas, that we ſhould thus blaſpheme God, and blaſt our own Joys! Scripture aſſures us, that *God is Love* (e); that *Fury is not in Him* (f); that *He hath no Pleaſure in the Death of the Wicked, but that the Wicked turn from his Way and live* (g). Much more hath He teſtified his Love to his Choſen, and his full Reſolution effectually to ſave them. O that we could always think of God, as we do of a Friend; as of one that unfeignedly loves us, even more than we do ourſelves; whoſe very Heart is ſet upon us to do us Good, and hath therefore provided for us an everlaſting Dwelling with Himſelf; it would not then be ſo hard to have our Hearts ever with Him! Where we love moſt heartily, we ſhall think moſt ſweetly, and moſt freely. I fear moſt Chriſtians think higher of the Love of a hearty Friend, than of the Love of God; and what Wonder then if they love their Friends better than God, and truſt them more confidently than God, and had rather live with them than with God?

§ 20. (9) *Carefully obſerve and cheriſh the Motions of the Spirit of God.* If ever thy Soul get above this Earth, and get acquainted with this heavenly Life, the Spirit of God muſt be to thee, as the Chariot to *Elijah*; yea, the very living Principle by which thou muſt move and aſcend. O then, grieve not thy Guide, quench not thy Life, knock not off thy Chariot-Wheels! You little think how much the Life

(e) 1 John iv. 16. (f) Iſai. xxvii. 4. (g) Ezek. xxxiii. 11.

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of all your Graces, and the Happineſs of your Souls, depend upon your ready and cordial Obedience to the Spirit. When the Spirit urges thee to ſecret Prayer; or forbids thee thy known Tranſgreſſions; or points out to thee the Way in which thou ſhouldſt go; and thou wilt not regard, no Wonder if Heaven and thy Soul be ſtrange. If thou wilt not follow the Spirit, while it would draw thee to Chriſt and thy Duty; how ſhould it lead thee to Heaven, and bring thy Heart into the Preſence of God? What ſupernatural Help, what bold Acceſs, ſhall the Soul find in its Approaches to the Almighty, that conſtantly obeys the Spirit? And how backward, how dull, how aſhamed, will he be in theſe Addreſſes, who hath often broke away from the Spirit that would have guided him? *Chriſtian Reader*, doſt thou not feel ſometimes a ſtrong Impreſſion to retire from the World, and draw near to God? Do not diſobey, but take the Offer, and hoiſt up thy Sails while this bleſſed Gale may be had. The more of this Spirit we reſiſt, the deeper will it wound; and the more we obey, the ſpeedier will be our Pace.

§ 21. (10) *I adviſe thee, as a farther Help to this heavenly Life, not to neglect the due Care of thy bodily Health.* Thy Body is an uſeful Servant, if thou give it its Due, and no more than its Due; but it is a moſt devouring Tyrant, if thou ſuffer it to have what it unreaſonably deſires; and it is as a blunted Knife, if thou unjuſtly deny it what is neceſſary to its Support. When we conſider, how frequently Men offend on both Extremes, and how few uſe their Bodies aright, we cannot wonder if they be much hindered in their Converſe with Heaven. Moſt Men are Slaves to their Appetite, and can ſcarce deny any Thing to the Fleſh, and are therefore willingly carried by it to their Sports, or Profits, or vain Companions,

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panions, when they ſhould raiſe their Minds to God and Heaven. As you love your Souls, *Make not Proviſion for the Fleſh, to fulfil the Luſts thereof* (h); but remember, *to be carnally minded, is Death; becauſe the carnal Mind is Enmity againſt God, for it is not ſubject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the Fleſh cannot pleaſe God. Therefore, Brethren, we are Debtors, not to the Fleſh, to live after the Fleſh. For if ye live after the Fleſh, ye ſhall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the Deeds of the Body, ye ſhall live* (i). There are a few, who much hinder their heavenly Joy, by denying the Body its Neceſſaries, and ſo making it unable to ſerve them: If ſuch wronged their Fleſh only, it would be no great Matter; but they wrong their Souls alſo; as he that ſpoils the Houſe, injures the Inhabitants. When the Body is ſick, and the Spirits languiſh, how heavily do we move in the Thoughts and Joys of Heaven?

(h) Rom. xiii. 14. (i) Rom. viii. 6--8, 12, 13.

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CHAP. XIII.

The Nature of heavenly Contemplation; with the Time, Place, and Temper fitteſt for it.

§ 1. *The Duty of heavenly Contemplation is recommended to the Reader,* § 2. *and defined:* § 3—6. (I) *The Definition is illuſtrated:* § 7. (II) *The Time fitteſt for it is repreſented, as,* § 8. (1) *ſtated;* § 9—12. (2) *frequent;* § 13. *and* (3) *ſeaſonable, every Day, and particularly every Lord's Day;* § 14—17. *but more eſpecially, when our Hearts are warmeſt with a Senſe of divine Things; or when we are afflicted, or tempted; or when we are near Death:* § 18. (III) *The fitteſt Place for it, is the moſt retired:* § 19. (IV) *And the fitteſt Temper for it, is,* § 20. (1) *when our Minds are moſt clear of the World,* § 21. (2) *and moſt ſolemn and ſerious.*

§ 1. ONCE more I intreat thee, *Reader,* as thou makeſt Conſcience of a revealed Duty, and dareſt not wilfully reſiſt the Spirit; as thou valueſt the high Delights of a Saint, and the Soul-raviſhing Exerciſe of heavenly Contemplation; that thou diligently ſtudy, and ſpeedily, and faithfully practice, the following Directions. If, by this Means, thou doſt not find an Increaſe of all thy Graces, and doſt not grow beyond the Stature of common Chriſtians, and art not made more ſerviceable in thy Place, and more precious in the Eyes of all diſcerning Perſons, if thy Soul

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Soul enjoy not more Communion with God, and thy Life be not fuller of Comfort, and haſt it not readier by thee at a dying Hour; then caſt away theſe Directions, and exclaim againſt me for ever as a Deceiver.

§ 2. THE Duty which I preſs upon thee ſo earneſtly, and in the Practice of which I am now to direct thee, is, "The ſet and ſolemn Acting of all "the Powers of thy Soul in Meditation upon thy "everlaſting Reſt." More fully to explain the Nature of this Duty, I will here ——*illuſtrate a little the Deſcription itſelf*,——then point out *the fitteſt Time*, ——*Place*,——and *Temper of Mind for it*.

§ 3. (1) *It is not improper to illuſtrate a little the Manner in which we have deſcribed this Duty of Meditation, or the conſidering and contemplating of ſpiritual Things.* It is confeſſed to be a Duty by all, but practically denied by moſt. Many that make Conſcience of other Duties, eaſily neglect this; they are troubled, if they omit a Sermon, a Faſt, or a Prayer in publick or private; yet were never troubled that they have omitted *Meditation* perhaps all their Life-Time to this very Day; though it be that Duty, by which all other Duties are improved, and by which the Soul digeſteth Truths for its Nouriſhment and Comfort. It was God's Command to *Joſhua*, *This Book of the Law ſhall not depart out of thy Mouth, but thou ſhalt meditate therein Day and Night, that thou mayſt obſerve to do according to all that is written therein* (a). As Digeſtion turns Food into Chyle, and Blood, for vigorous Health; ſo *Meditation* turns the Truths received and remembered into warm Affection, firm Reſolution, and holy Converſation.

§ 4. *This Meditation is, the Acting of all the Powers of the Soul.* It is the Work of the Living, and not

(a) Joſhua i. 8.

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of the Dead. It is a Work of all others the most spiritual and sublime, and therefore not to be well performed by a Heart that is merely carnal and earthly. They must necessarily have some Relation to Heaven, before they can familiarly converse there. I suppose them to be such as have a Title to Rest, when I persuade them to rejoice in the Meditations of Rest. And supposing thee to be *a Christian*, I am now exhorting thee to be *an active Christian*. And it is the Work *of the Soul* I am setting thee to, for *bodily Exercise* doth here *profit* but *little*. And it must have *all the Powers* of the Soul, to distinguish it from the common Meditation of Students; for the Understanding is not the whole Soul, and therefore cannot do the whole Work. As in the Body, the Stomach must turn the Food into Chyle, and prepare for the Liver, the Liver and Spleen turn it into Blood, and prepare for the Heart and Brain; so in the Soul, the Understanding must take in Truths, and prepare them for the Will, and that for the Affections. Christ and Heaven have various Excellencies, and therefore God hath formed the Soul with different Powers for apprehending those Excellencies. What the better had we been for odoriferous Flowers, if we had no Smell? Or what Good would Language or Musick have done us, if we could not hear? Or what Pleasure should we have found in Meats and Drinks, without the Sense of Taste? So, what Good could all the Glory of Heaven have done us, or what Pleasure should we have had in the Perfections of God Himself, if we had been without the Affections of Love and Joy? And what Strength or Sweetness canst thou possibly receive by thy Meditations on Eternity, while thou dost not exercise those Affections of the Soul, by which thou must be sensible of this Sweetness and Strength? It is the Mistake of Christians,

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to think that Meditation is only the Work of the Understanding and Memory; when every School Boy can do this, or Persons that hate the Things which they think on. So that you see there is more to be done, than barely to remember and think of Heaven; as some Labours not only stir a Hand, or a Foot, but exercise the whole Body, so doth Meditation the whole Soul. As the Affections of Sinners are set on the World, are turned to Idols, and fallen from God, as well as their Understanding; so must their Affections be reduced to God, as well as the Understanding; and as their whole Soul was filled with Sin before, so the whole must be filled with God now. See *David*'s Description of the *blessed Man, His Delight is in the Law of the Lord, and in his Law doth he meditate Day and Night* (b).

§ 5. *This Meditation is set and solemn.* As there is *solemn Prayer*, when we set ourselves wholly to that Duty; and *ejaculatory Prayer*, when in the Midst of other Business we send up some short Request to God: So also there is *solemn Meditation*, when we apply ourselves wholly to that Work; and *transient Meditation*, when in the Midst of other Business we have some good Thoughts of God in our Minds. And as solemn Prayer is, either *set*, in a constant Course of Duty; or *occasional*, at an extraordinary Season; so also is Meditation. Now, though I would persuade you to that Meditation, which is mixed with your common Labours, and also that which special Occasions direct you to; yet I would have you likewise make it a constant standing Duty, as you do by hearing, praying, and reading the Scriptures; and no more intermix other Matters with it, than you would with Prayer, or other stated Solemnities.

(b) Psalm i. 2.

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§ 6. *This Meditation is upon thy everlasting Rest.* I would not have you cast-off your other Meditations; but surely, as Heaven hath the Preeminence in Perfection, it should have it also in our Meditation. That which will make us most happy when we possess it, will make us most joyful when we meditate upon it. Other Meditations are as numerous, as there are Lines in the Scripture, or Creatures in the Universe, or particular Providences in the Government of the World. But this is a Walk to Mount *Sion*; from the Kingdoms of this World, to the Kingdom of Saints; from Earth, to Heaven; from Time, to Eternity; it is a walking upon Sun, Moon, and Stars, in the Garden and Paradise of God. It may seem far off; but Spirits are quick; whether in the Body, or out of the Body, their Motion is swift. You need not fear, like the Men of the World, lest these Thoughts should make you mad. It is Heaven, and not Hell, that I persuade you to walk in. It is Joy, and not Sorrow, that I persuade you to exercise. I urge you to look on no deformed Objects, but only upon the ravishing Glory of Saints, and the unspeakable Excellencies of the God of Glory, and the Beams that stream from the Face of his Son. Will it distract a Man to think of his only Happiness? Will it distract the miserable to think of Mercy, or the Prisoner to foresee Deliverance, or the Poor to think of approaching Riches and Honour? Methinks it should rather make a Man mad, to think of living in a World of Woe, and abiding in Poverty and Sickness, among the Rage of wicked Men; than to think of living with Christ in Bliss. *But Wisdom is justified of all her Children* (c). Knowledge hath no Enemy but the Ignorant. This heavenly Course was never spoke against by any, but those that never knew it, or never used it.

(c) Luke vii. 35.

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it. I fear more the Neglect of Men that approve it, than the Oppoſition or Arguments of any againſt it.

§ 7. (II) As to *the fitteſt Time* for this heavenly Contemplation, let me only adviſe, that it be,——*ſtated*,——*frequent*,——and *ſeaſonable*.

§ 8. (1) *Give it a ſtated Time.* If thou ſuit thy Time to the Advantage of the Work, without placing any Religion in the Time itſelf, thou haſt no need to fear Superſtition. Stated Time is a Hedge to Duty, and defends it againſt many Temptations to Omiſſion. Some have not their Time at Command, and therefore cannot ſet their Hours; and many are ſo poor, that the Neceſſities of their Families deny them this Freedom; ſuch Perſons ſhould be watchful to redeem Time as much as they can, and take their vacant Opportunities as they fall, and eſpecially join Meditation and Prayer, as much as they can, with the Labours of their Callings. Yet thoſe that have more Time to ſpare from their worldly Neceſſities, and are Maſters of their Time, I ſtill adviſe, to keep this Duty to a ſtated Time. And indeed, if every Work of the Day had its appointed Time, we ſhould be better ſkilled, both in redeeming Time, and in performing Duty.

§ 9. (2) *Let it be frequent*, as well as ſtated. How oft it ſhould be, I cannot determine, becauſe Men's Circumſtances differ. But in general, Scripture requires it to be frequent, when it mentions *meditating Day and Night*. For thoſe, therefore, who can conveniently omit other Buſineſs, I adviſe, that it be once a Day at leaſt. Frequency in heavenly Contemplation is particularly important,

§ 10.——*To prevent a Shyneſs between God and thy Soul.* Frequent Society breeds Familiarity, and Familiarity increaſes Love and Delight, and makes us

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bold in our Addresses. The chief End of this Duty is, to have Acquaintance and Fellowship with God, and therefore if thou come but seldom to it, thou wilt keep thyself a Stranger still. When a Man feels his Need of God, and must seek his Help in a Time of Necessity, then it is great Encouragement to go to a God we know, and are acquainted with. "O!" saith the heavenly Christian, "I know both whither "I go, and to whom. I have gone this Way many "a Time before now. It is the same God that I "daily converse with: and the Way has been my "daily Walk. God knows me well enough, and I "have some Knowledge of Him." On the other Side, what a Horror and Discouragement will it be to the Soul, when it is forced to fly to God in Straits, to think, "Alas! I know not whither to go. I "never went the Way before. I have no Ac-"quaintance at the Court of Heaven. My Soul "knows not that God that I must speak to, and I "fear He will not know my Soul." But especially when we come to die, and must immediately appear before this God, and expect to enter into his eternal Rest, then the Difference will plainly appear; then what a Joy will it be to think, "I am going to the "Place that I daily conversed in; to the Place from "whence I tasted such frequent Delights; to that "God whom I have met in my Meditation so often. "My Heart hath been at Heaven before now, and "hath often tasted its reviving Sweetness; and if my "Eyes were so enlightened, and my Spirits so re-"freshed, when I had but a Taste, what will it be "when I shall feed on it freely?" On the contrary, what a Terror will it be to think, "I must "die, and go I know not whither; from a Place "where I am acquainted, to a Place where I have "no Familiarity or Knowledge!" It is inexpressible

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Horror to a dying Man, to have ſtrange Thoughts of God and Heaven. I am perſuaded the Neglect of this Duty ſo commonly makes Death, even to godly Men, unwelcome and uncomfortable. Therefore I perſuade to Frequency in this Duty. And as it will prevent Shyneſs between thee and God, ſo alſo,

§ 11.——*It will prevent Unſkilfulneſs in the Duty itſelf.* How aukwardly do Men ſet their Hands to a Work they are ſeldom employed in? Whereas Frequency will habituate thy Heart to the Work, and make it more eaſy and delightful. The Hill which made thee pant and blow at firſt going up, thou mayſt eaſily run up, when thou art once accuſtomed to it.

§ 12.——*Thou wilt alſo prevent the Loſs of that Heat and Life thou haſt obtained.* If thou eat but once in two or three Days, thou wilt loſe thy Strength as faſt as it comes. If in holy Meditation thou get near to Chriſt, and warm thy Heart with the Fire of Love, and then come but ſeldom, thy former Coldneſs will ſoon return; eſpecially as the Work is ſo ſpiritual, and againſt the Bent of depraved Nature. It is true, the intermixing of other Duties, eſpecially *ſecret Prayer*, may do much to the keeping thy Heart above; but *Meditation is the Life of moſt other Duties*, and *the View of Heaven is the Life of Meditation.*

§ 13. (3) *Chuſe alſo the moſt ſeaſonable Time.* All Things are beautiful and excellent in their Seaſon. Unſeaſonableneſs may loſe the Fruit of thy Labour, may raiſe Difficulties in the Work, and may turn a Duty to a Sin. The ſame Hour may be ſeaſonable to one, and unſeaſonable to another. *Servants* and *Labourers* muſt take that Seaſon which their Buſineſs will beſt afford; either while at work, or in travelling, or when they lie awake in the Night. *Such as can chuſe what Time of the Day they will*, ſhould obſerve,

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when they find their Spirits most active and fit for Contemplation, and fix upon that as the stated Time. *I have always found that the fittest Time for myself is the Evening, from Sun-setting to the Twilight.* I the rather mention this, because it was the Experience of a better and wiser Man; for it is expresly said, *Isaac went out to meditate in the Field at the Even-tide* (d). ——*The Lord's Day* is exceeding seasonable for this Exercise. When should we more seasonably contemplate on Rest, than on that Day of Rest which typifies it to us? It being a Day appropriated to *spiritual Duties*, methinks we should never exclude this Duty which is so eminently spiritual. I verily think this is the chief Work of a *Christian Sabbath*, and most agreeable to the Design of its *positive Institution*. What fitter Time to converse with our *Lord*, than on the *Lord's Day*? What fitter Day to ascend to Heaven, than that on which He arose from Earth, and fully triumphed over Death and Hell. The fittest Temper for a true Christian, is, like *John*, to *be in the Spirit on the Lord's Day* (e). And what can bring us to this Joy in the Spirit, but the spiritual beholding of our approaching Glory? Take Notice of this, *you that spend the Lord's Day only in publick Worship*; your allowing no Time to *private Duty*, and therefore neglecting this spiritual Duty of *Meditation*, is very hurtful to your Souls. *You also that have Time on the Lord's Day for Idleness, and vain Discourse*, were you but acquainted with this Duty of *Contemplation*, you would need no other Pastime; you would think the longest Day short enough, and be sorry that the Night hath shortened your Pleasure. *Christians*, let Heaven have more Share in your Sabbaths, where you must shortly keep your everlasting Sabbath. Use your Sabbaths as Steps to Glory, till you have passed them

(d) Gen. xxiv. 63. (e) Rev. i. 10.

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them all, and are there arrived. Especially you that are poor, and cannot take Time in the Week as you desire, see that you well improve this Day; as your Bodies rest from their Labours, let your Spirits seek after Rest from God.

§ 14. BESIDES the constant Seasonableness of *every Day*, and *particularly every Lord's Day*, there are also *more peculiar Seasons for heavenly Contemplation*. As for Instance,

§ 15.——*When God hath more abundantly warmed thy Spirit with Fire from above.* Then thou mayst soar with greater Freedom. A little Labour will set thy Heart a going at such a Time as this; whereas at another Time thou mayst take Pains to little Purpose. Observe the Gales of the Spirit, and how the Spirit of Christ doth move thy Spirit. *Without Christ we can do nothing*; and therefore let us be doing, while He is doing; and be sure not to be out of the Way, nor asleep, when He comes. When the Spirit finds thy Heart, like *Peter*, in Prison, and in Irons, and smites thee, and says, *Arise up quickly, and follow me*; be sure thou then arise, and follow, and thou shalt find thy *Chains fall off*, and all *Doors will open*, and thou wilt be at Heaven before thou art aware.

§ 16.—*Another peculiar Season for this Duty is, when thou art in a suffering, distressed, or tempted State.* When should we take our Cordials, but in Times of fainting? When is it more seasonable to walk to Heaven, than when we know not in what Corner of Earth to live with Comfort? Or when should our Thoughts converse more above, than when they have nothing but Grief below? Where should *Noah*'s Dove be but in the Ark, when the Waters cover all the Earth, and she cannot find Rest for the Sole of her Foot? What should we think on, but our *Father's House*, when we have not even the Husks of the World

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World to feed upon? Surely God sends thy Afflictions to this very Purpose. Happy art thou, *poor Man*, if thou make this Use of thy Poverty! and *thou that art sick*, if thou so improve thy Sickness! It is seasonable to go to the promised Land, when our Burthens are increased in *Egypt*, and our Straits in the Wilderness. *Reader*, if thou knewest what a Cordial to thy Griefs the serious Views of Glory are, thou wouldst less fear these harmless Troubles, and more use that preserving reviving Remedy. *In the Multitude of my* troubled *Thoughts within me*, saith *David*, *thy Comforts delight my Soul* (f). *I reckon*, saith *Paul*, *that the Sufferings of this present Time, are not worthy to be compared with the Glory which shall be revealed in us* (g). *For which Cause we faint not, but though our outward Man perish, yet the inward Man is renewed Day by Day. For our light Affliction, which is but for a Moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory; while we look not at the Things which are seen, but at the Things which are not seen; for the Things which are seen, are temporal; but the Things which are not seen, are eternal* (h).

§ 17.——*And another Season peculiarly fit for this heavenly Duty, is, when the Messengers of God summon us to die.* When should we most frequently sweeten our Souls, with the believing Thoughts of another Life, than when we find that this is almost ended? No Men have greater Need of supporting Joys, than dying Men; and those Joys must be fetched from our eternal Joy. As heavenly Delights are sweetest, when nothing earthly is joined with them; so the Delights of dying Christians are oftentimes the sweetest they ever had. What a prophetical Blessing had dying *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, for their Sons? With what a heavenly Song, and divine Benedic-

tion,

(f) Psalm xciv. 19. (g) Rom. viii. 18. (h) 2 Cor. iv. 16--18.

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tion, did *Moſes* conclude his Life? What heavenly Advice and Prayer had the Diſciples from their Lord, when He was about to leave them? When *Paul* was *ready to be offered up*, what heavenly Exhortation and Advice did he give the *Philippians*, *Timothy*, and the *Elders* of *Epheſus*? How near to Heaven was *John* in *Patmos*, but a little before his Tranſlation thither? It is the general Temper of the Saints, to be then moſt heavenly, when they are neareſt to Heaven. If it be thy Caſe, *Reader*, to perceive thy dying Time draw on, O where ſhould thy Heart now be, but with Chriſt! Methinks thou ſhouldſt even behold Him ſtanding by thee, and ſhouldſt beſpeak Him as thy Father, thy Huſband, thy Phyſician, thy Friend. Methinks thou ſhouldſt, as it were, ſee the Angels about thee, waiting to perform their laſt Office to thy Soul; even thoſe Angels, which diſdained not to *carry into Abraham's Boſom* the Soul of *Lazarus*, nor will think much to conduct thee thither. Look upon thy Pain and Sickneſs, as *Jacob* did on *Joſeph*'s Chariots, and let thy *Spirit revive* within thee, and ſay, "*It is enough, Chriſt is yet alive; becauſe He lives, I* "*ſhall live alſo* (i)." Doſt thou need the choiceſt Cordials? Here are choicer than the World can afford; here are all the Joys of Heaven, even the Viſion of God, and Chriſt, and whatſoever the Bleſſed there poſſeſs; theſe Dainties are offered thee by the Hand of Chriſt; He hath written the Receipt in the Promiſes of the Goſpel; He hath prepared the Ingredients in Heaven; only put forth the Hand of Faith, and feed upon them, and rejoice, and live. The Lord ſaith to thee, as to *Elijah*, *Ariſe and eat, becauſe the Journey is too great for thee.* Though it be not long, yet the Way is miry; therefore obey his Voice, ariſe and eat, *and in the Strength of that Meat* thou

(i) John xiv. 19.

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thou mayst *go to the Mount of God*; and, like *Moses*, *die in the Mount whither thou goest up*; and say, as *Simeon*, *Lord, now lettest thou thy Servant depart in Peace*; *for my Eye* of Faith *hath seen thy Salvation* (k).

§ 18. (III) *Concerning the fittest Place for heavenly Contemplation, it is sufficient to say, that the most convenient is some private Retirement.* Our Spirits need every Help, and to be freed from every Hinderance in the Work. If in *private Prayer*, Christ directs us to *enter into our Closet, and shut the Door*, that *our Father may see us in secret* (l), so should we do in this Meditation. How often did Christ himself retire to some Mountain, or Wilderness, or other solitary Place? I give not this Advice for *occasional Meditation*, but for that which is *set and solemn*. Therefore withdraw thyself from all Society, even the Society of godly Men, that thou mayst a while enjoy the Society of thy Lord. If a Student cannot study in a Croud, who exerciseth only his Invention and Memory; much less shouldst thou be in a Croud, who art to exercise all the Powers of thy Soul, and upon an Object so far above Nature. We are fled so far from *superstitious Solitude*, that we have even cast off the *Solitude of contemplative Devotion*. We seldom read of God's appearing by Himself, or by his Angels, to any of his Prophets or Saints in a Croud; but frequently when they were alone.——But observe for thyself, what Place best agrees with thy Spirit; whether within Doors, or without. *Isaac*'s Example, in *going out to meditate in the Field*, will, I believe, best suit with most. Our Lord so much used a solitary Garden, that even *Judas*, when he came to betray Him, *knew* where to find Him: And though He took his Disciples thither with Him, yet *He was withdrawn from*

(k) Luke ii. 29, 30. (l) Matt. vi. 6.

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from them for more secret Devotions (m): And tho' his Meditation be not directly named, but only his praying, yet it is very clearly implied; for *His Soul is* first made *sorrowful* with the bitter Meditations on His Sufferings and Death, and then He poureth it out in Prayer (n). So that Christ had his accustomed Place, and consequently accustomed Duty, and so must we; He hath a Place that is solitary, whither He retireth Himself, even from His own Disciples, and so must we; His Meditations go further than His Thoughts, they affect and pierce His Heart and Soul, and so must ours. Only there is a wide Difference in the Object; Christ meditates on the Sufferings that our Sins had deserved, so that the Wrath of His Father passed through all His Soul: But we are to meditate on the Glory He hath purchased, that the Love of the Father, and the Joy of the Spirit, may enter at our Thoughts, and revive our Affections, and overflow our Souls.

§ 19. (IV) *I am next to advise thee concerning the Preparations of thy Heart for this heavenly Contemplation.* The Success of the Work much depends on the Frame of thy Heart. When Man's Heart had nothing in it to grieve the Spirit, it was then the delightful Habitation of his Maker. God did not quit his Residence there, till Man expell'd Him by unworthy Provocations. There was no Shyness or Reserve, till the Heart grew sinful, and too loathsome a Dungeon for God to delight in. And was this Soul reduced to its former Innocency, God would quickly return to His former Habitation; yea, so far as it is renewed and repaired by the Spirit, and purged from its Lusts, and beautified with His Image, the Lord will yet acknowledge it His own; Christ will manifest himself unto it, and the Spirit will take it for His Temple and Residence. So far as the Heart is qualified

(m) John xviii. 1, 2. Luke xxii. 41. (n) Mark xiv. 34, 35.

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lified for converſing with God, ſo far it uſually enjoys Him. Therefore, *with all Diligence keep thy Heart, for out of it are the Iſſues of Life* (o). More particularly,

§ 20. (1) *Get thy Heart as clear from the World as thou canſt.* Wholly lay by the Thoughts of thy Buſineſs, Troubles, Enjoyments, and every Thing that may take up any Room in thy Soul. Get it as empty as thou poſſibly canſt, that it may be the more capable of being filled with God. If thou couldſt perform ſome *outward Duty* with a Piece of thy Heart, while the other is abſent, yet this above all I am ſure thou canſt not. When thou ſhalt go into the *Mount of Contemplation*, thou wilt be like the covetous Man at the Heap of Gold, who, when he might take as much as he could, lamented that he was able to carry no more; ſo thou wilt find as much of God and Glory, as thy narrow Heart is able to contain, and almoſt nothing to hinder thy full Poſſeſſion, but the Incapacity of thy own Spirit. Then thou wilt think, "O that this Underſtanding, and theſe Affections, "could contain more! It is more my Unfitneſs than "any Thing elſe, that even this Place is not my "Heaven. *God is in this Place, and I know it not.* "This *Mount is full of Chariots of Fire*, but mine "Eyes are ſhut, and I cannot ſee them. O the "Words of Love Chriſt hath to ſpeak, and Wonders "of Love He hath to ſhew, but I cannot bear them "yet! Heaven is ready for me, but my Heart is "unready for Heaven." Therefore, *Reader*, ſeeing thy Enjoyment of God in this Contemplation much depends on the Capacity and Diſpoſition of thy Heart, ſeek Him here, if ever, with all thy Soul. Thruſt not Chriſt into *the Stable, and the Manger*, as if thou hadſt better Gueſts for the chief Rooms. Say to all thy

(o) Prov. iv. 23.

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thy worldly Buſineſs and Thoughts, as Chriſt to his Diſciples, *Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.* Or as *Abraham* to his Servants, when he went to offer *Iſaac, Abide ye here, and I will go yonder and worſhip, and come again to you.* Even as *the Prieſts thruſt King Uzziah out of the Temple*, where he preſumed *to burn Incenſe*, when they ſaw *the Leproſie* upon him; ſo do thou thruſt thoſe Thoughts from the Temple of thy Heart, which have the Badge of God's Prohibition upon them.

§ 21. (2) *Be ſure to ſet upon this Work with the greateſt Solemnity of Heart and Mind.* There is no trifling in holy Things. *God will be ſanctified in them that come nigh Him* (p). Theſe ſpiritual, excellent, Soul-raiſing Duties, are, if well uſed, moſt profitable; but when uſed unfaithfully, moſt dangerous. Labour therefore to have the deepeſt Apprehenſions of the Preſence of God, and His incomprehenſible Greatneſs. If Queen *Eſther* muſt not draw near, till *the King held out the Sceptre*; think, then, with what Reverence thou ſhouldſt approach Him, who made the Worlds with the Word of His Mouth, who upholds the Earth as in the Palm of His Hand, who keeps the Sun, Moon, and Stars in their Courſes, and who ſets Bounds to the raging Sea. Thou art going to converſe with Him, before whom the Earth will quake, and Devils do tremble, and at whoſe Bar thou and all the World muſt ſhortly ſtand, and be finally judged. O think! "I ſhall then have lively "Apprehenſions of His Majeſty. My drowſy Spirits "will then be awakened, and my Irreverence be laid "aſide; and why ſhould I not now be rouzed with "the Senſe of His Greatneſs, and the Dread of His "Name poſſeſs my Soul?" Labour alſo to apprehend the Greatneſs of the Work which thou attempteſt,

(p) Lev. x. 3.

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tempteſt, and to be deeply ſenſible both of its Importance and Excellency. If thou waſt pleading for thy Life at the Bar of an earthly Judge, thou wouldſt be ſerious; and yet that would be a Trifle to this. If thou waſt engaged in ſuch a Work as *David* againſt *Goliah*, on which the Welfare of a Kingdom depended; in itſelf conſidered, it were nothing to this. Suppoſe thou waſt going to ſuch a *Wreſtling* as *Jacob*'s, or to ſee the Sight which the *three Diſciples ſaw in the Mount*; how ſeriouſly, how reverently, wouldſt thou both approach and behold! If but an Angel from Heaven ſhould appoint to meet thee, at the ſame Time and Place of thy Contemplations; with what Dread wouldſt thou be filled? Conſider then, with what a Spirit thou ſhouldſt meet the Lord, and with what Seriouſneſs and Awe thou ſhouldſt daily converſe with Him. Conſider alſo the bleſſed Iſſue of the Work, if it ſucceed; it will be thy Admiſſion into the Preſence of God, and the Beginning of thy eternal Glory on Earth; a Means to make thee live above the Rate of other Men, and fix thee in the next Room to the Angels themſelves, that thou mayſt both live and die joyfully. The Prize being ſo great, thy Preparations ſhould be anſwerable. There is none on Earth live ſuch a Life of Joy and Bleſſedneſs, as thoſe that are acquainted with this *heavenly Converſation*. The Joys of all other Men are but like a Child's Play, a Fool's Laughter, or a ſick Man's Dream of Health. He that trades for Heaven is the only Gainer, and he that neglects it is the only Loſer. How ſeriouſly, therefore, ſhould this Work be done?

CHAP.

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CHAP. XIV.

What Use heavenly Contemplation makes of Consideration, Affections, Soliloquy, and Prayer.

§ 1. *The Reader is invited to engage in heavenly Contemplation*; § 2. *and to that End is* (I) *directed in the Use of Consideration*, § 3—8. *the great Influence of which over the Heart is represented in several Instances:* § 9. *Then* (II) *it is shewn how heavenly Contemplation is promoted by the Affections*; *particularly*, § 10—12. (1) *by Love*, § 13. (2) *Desire*, § 14. (3) *Hope*, § 15. (4) *Courage or Boldness*, § 16—18. *and* (5) *Joy*. § 19. *A Caution is added concerning this Exercise of the Affections*. § 20—22. (III) *The Chapter concludes with some Account of the Usefulness of Soliloquy, and Prayer, in heavenly Contemplation.*

§ 1. HAVING set thy Heart in Tune, we now come to the Musick itself. Having got an Appetite, now approach to the Feast, and delight thy Soul, *as with Marrow and Fatness*. *Come, for all Things are now ready.* Heaven, and Christ, and *the exceeding Weight of Glory*, are before you. Do not *make light* of this Invitation, nor *begin to make Excuses*; whatever thou art, rich or poor, tho' in Almshouses or Hospitals, tho' in *Highways and Hedges*, my Commission is, if possible, to *compel you to come in*; and *blessed is he that shall eat Bread in the Kingdom of God!*

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God! The *Manna* lieth about your Tents, walk out, gather it up, take it home, and feed upon it. In order to this, I am only to direct you——*how to use your Consideration*,——and *Affections*,——*your Soliloquy*,——*and Prayer*.

§ 2. (1) *Consideration is the great Instrument by which this heavenly Work is carried on.* This must be voluntary, and not forced. Some Men consider unwillingly; so God will make the Wicked *consider* their Sins, when He shall *set them in Order before their Eyes* (a); so shall the Damned consider of the Excellency of Christ, whom they once despised, and of the eternal Joys which they have foolishly lost. Great is the Power which Consideration hath for moving the Affections, and impressing Things on the Heart; as will appear by the following Particulars.

§ 3. (1) *Consideration, as it were, opens the Door between the Head and the Heart.* The Understanding having received Truths, lays them up in the Memory, and Consideration conveys them from thence to the Affections. What Excellency would there be in much Learning and Knowledge, if the Obstructions between the Head and the Heart were but opened, and the Affections did but correspond to the Understanding? He is usually the best Scholar, whose Apprehension is quick, clear, and tenacious; but he is usually the best Christian, whose Apprehension is the deepest, and most affectionate, and who has the readiest Passages, not so much from the Ear to the Brain, as from that to the Heart. And though the Spirit be the principal Cause; yet, on our Part, this Passage must be opened by Consideration.

§ 4. (2) *Consideration presents to the Affections those Things which are most important.* The most delightful Object does not entertain where it is not seen, nor the

(a) Psalm l. 21, 22.

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the most joyful News affect him that does not hear it; but Consideration presents to our View those Things which were as absent, and brings them to the Eye and Ear of the Soul. Are not Christ and Glory affecting Objects? Would they not work Wonders upon the Soul, if they were but clearly discovered, and our Apprehensions of them were in some Measure answerable to their Worth? It is Consideration that presents them to us: This is the Christian's Perspective, by which he can see from Earth to Heaven.

§ 5. (3) *Consideration also presents the most important Things in the most affecting Way.* Consideration reasons the Case with a Man's own Heart. When a Believer would reason his Heart to heavenly Contemplation, how many Arguments offer themselves from God and Christ, from each of the divine Perfections, from our former and present State, from Promises, from present Sufferings and Enjoyments, from Hell and Heaven? Every Thing offers itself to promote our Joy, and Consideration is the Hand to draw them all out; it adds one Reason to another, till the Scales turn: This it does, when persuading to Joy, till it hath silenced all your Distrust and Sorrows, and your Cause for rejoicing lies plain before you. If another's Reasoning is powerful with us, though we are not certain whether he intends to inform, or deceive us; how much more should our own Reasoning prevail with us, when we are so well acquainted with our own Intentions? Nay, how much more should God's Reasoning work upon us, which we are sure cannot deceive, or be deceived? Now Consideration is but the Reading over, and repeating God's Reasons to our Hearts. As the *Prodigal* had many and strong Reasons to plead with himself, why he should return to his *Father's House*; so have we to plead with our Affec-

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Affections, to perſuade them to our Father's everlaſting Manſions.

§ 6. (4) *Conſideration exalts Reaſon to its juſt Authority.* It helps to deliver it from its Captivity to the Senſes, and ſets it again on the Throne of the Soul. When Reaſon is ſilent, it is uſually ſubject; for when it is aſleep, the Senſes domineer. But Conſideration awakens our Reaſon, till, like *Sampſon*, it rouzes up itſelf, and breaks the Bonds of Senſuality, and bears down the Deluſions of the Fleſh. What Strength can the Lion exert while aſleep? What is a King, when depoſed from his Throne, more than another Man? Spiritual Reaſon excited by Meditation, and not Fancy or fleſhly Senſe, muſt judge of heavenly Joys. Conſideration exalts the Objects of Faith, and comparatively diſgraces the Objects of Senſe. The moſt inconſiderate Men are the moſt ſenſual. It is too eaſy and common to ſin againſt Knowledge; but againſt ſober, ſtrong, perſevering Conſideration, Men ſeldom offend.

§ 7. (5) *Conſideration makes Reaſon ſtrong and active.* Before, it was as a ſtanding Water, but now as a Stream, which violently bears down all before it. Before, it was as the Stones in the Brook, but now like that out of *David*'s Sling, which ſmites the *Goliah* of our Unbelief in the Forehead. As wicked Men continue wicked, becauſe they bring not Reaſon into Act and Exerciſe; ſo godly Men are uncomfortable, becauſe they let their Reaſon and Faith lie aſleep, and don't ſtir them up to Action by this Work of Meditation. What Fears, Sorrows, and Joys, will our very Dreams excite? How much more then would ſerious Meditation affect us?

§ 8. (6) *Conſideration can continue and perſevere in this rational Employment.* Meditation holds Reaſon and Faith to their Work, and blows the Fire till it tho-

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thoroughly burns. To run a few Steps will not get a Man Heat, but walking an Hour may; and tho' a sudden occasional Thought of Heaven will not raise our Affections to any spiritual Heat, yet Meditation can continue our Thoughts till our Hearts grow warm.——Thus you see the powerful Tendency of Consideration to produce this great Elevation of the Soul in heavenly Contemplation.

§ 9. (II) *Let us next see how this heavenly Work is promoted by the particular Exercise of the Affections.*—It is by *Consideration* that we first have Recourse to the *Memory*, and from thence take those *heavenly Doctrines*, which we intend to make the Subject of our *Meditation*; such as, Promises of eternal Life, Descriptions of the Saint's Glory, the Resurrection, *&c. &c. &c.*——We then present them to our *Judgment*, that it may deliberately view them over, and take an exact Survey, and determine uprightly concerning the Perfection of our celestial Happiness, against all the Dictates of Flesh and Sense, and so as to magnify the Lord in our Hearts, till we are filled with a *holy Admiration*.——But the principal Thing is to exercise, not merely our Judgment, but our *Faith* in the Truth of our everlasting Rest; by which I mean, both the Truth of the Promises, and of our own personal Interest in them, and Title to them. If we did really and firmly believe, *that there is such a Glory*, and *that within a few Days our Eyes should behold it*; O what Passions would it raise within us! What astonishing Apprehensions of that Life would it produce! What Love, what Longings, would it excite within us! O how it would actuate every Affection! How it would transport us with Joy, upon the least Assurance of our Title! Never expect to have Love and Joy move, when Faith stands still, which must lead the Way. Therefore daily exercise Faith, and

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ſet before it the Freeneſs of the Promiſe, God's urging all to accept it, Chriſt's gracious Diſpoſition, all the Evidences of the Love of Chriſt, his Faithfulneſs to his Engagements, and the Evidences of his Love in ourſelves; lay all theſe together, and think, whether they do not teſtify the good Will of the Lord concerning our Salvation, and may not properly be pleaded againſt our Unbelief.——Thus when the Judgment hath determined, and Faith hath apprehended, the Truth of our Happineſs, then may *our Meditation proceed to raiſe our Affections*, and particularly,——*Love*,——*Deſire*,——*Hope*,——*Courage* or *Boldneſs*,——and *Joy*.

§ 10. (1) *Love is the firſt Affection to be excited in heavenly Contemplation.* The Object of it is Goodneſs. Here, *Chriſtian*, is the Soul-reviving Part of thy Work. Go to thy *Memory*, thy *Judgment*, and thy *Faith*, and from them produce the Excellencies of thy Reſt; preſent theſe to thy Affection of Love, and thou wilt find thyſelf, as it were, in another World. Speak out, and Love can hear. Do but reveal theſe Things, and Love can ſee. It is the brutiſh Love of the World that is blind; divine Love is exceeding quick-ſighted. Let thy Faith take hold of thy Heart, and ſhew it the ſumptuous Buildings of thy eternal Habitation, and the glorious Ornaments of thy Father's Houſe, even the Manſions Chriſt is preparing, and the Honours of his Kingdom; let thy Faith lead thy Heart into the Preſence of God, and as near as thou poſſibly canſt, and ſay to it, "Behold the Antient of Days, the Lord Jehovah, whoſe Name is, "I AM: This is He, who made all Worlds with "His Word, who upholds the Earth, who rules the "Nations, who diſpoſes of all Events, who ſubdues "His Foes, who controuls the ſwelling Waves of "the Sea, who governs the Winds, and cauſes the

"Sun

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" Sun to run its Race, and the Stars to know their " Courſes: This is He, who loved thee from ever- " laſting, formed thee in the Womb, gave thee this " Soul, brought thee forth, ſhewed thee the Light, " and ranked thee with the chief of his earthly " Creatures, who endued thee with thy Underſtand- " ing, and beautified thee with His Gifts, who " maintains thy Life and all its Comforts, and diſtin- " guiſhes thee from the moſt miſerable and vileſt of " Men. O here is an Object worthy thy Love! " Here ſhouldſt thou even pour out thy Soul in Love! " Here it is impoſſible for thee to love too much! " This is the Lord, who hath bleſſed thee with His " Benefits, *ſpread thy Table in the Sight of thine Ene-* " *mies, and made thy Cup overflow!* This is He whom " Angels and Saints praiſe, and the heavenly Hoſts " for ever magnify!" Thus do thou expatiate in the Praiſes of God, and open His Excellencies to thine Heart, till the holy Fire of Love begins to kindle in thy Breaſt.

§ 11. If thou feeleſt thy *Love* not yet burn, lead thy Heart farther, and ſhew it the Son of the Living God, whoſe Name is, *Wonderful, Counſellor, the mighty God, the everlaſting Father, the Prince of Peace*; ſhew it the King of Saints on the Throne of his Glory, *the Firſt and the Laſt*; *who is, and was, and is to come*; *who liveth, and was dead, and behold, He lives for evermore*; *who hath made thy Peace, by the Blood of His Croſs*, and hath prepared thee with Himſelf an Habitation of Peace; His Office is the Great Peace-Maker; His Kingdom is the Kingdom of Peace; His Goſpel is the Tydings of Peace; His Voice to thee now, is the Voice of Peace: Draw near, and behold Him. Doſt thou not hear His Voice? He that bid *Thomas* come near, and ſee the Print of the Nails, and put his Finger into His Wounds; He

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it is that calls to thee, "Come near, and view the "Lord thy Saviour, *and be not faithless, but believing*; "*Peace be unto thee, fear not, it is I.*" Look well upon Him. Dost thou not know Him? It is He that brought thee up from the Pit of Hell, reversed the Sentence of thy Damnation, bore the Curse which thou shouldst have borne, restored thee to the Blessing thou hadst forfeited, and purchased the Advancement which thou must inherit for ever. And dost thou not yet know Him? His Hands were pierced, His Head, His Side, His Heart were pierced, that by these Marks thou mightest always know Him. Dost thou not remember when He *found thee lying in thy Blood, and took Pity on thee, and dressed thy Wounds, and brought thee* Home, *and said unto thee, Live?* Hast thou forgotten since He wounded Himself to cure thy Wounds, and let out His own Blood to stop thy bleeding? If thou knowest Him not by the Face, the Voice, the Hands, thou mayst know Him by the Heart; that Soul pitying Heart is His; it can be none but His; Love and Compassion are its certain Signatures: This is He, who chose thy Life before His own; who pleads His Blood before His Father, and makes continual Intercession for thee. If He had not suffered, what hadst thou suffered? There was but a Step between thee and Hell, when He stepp'd in, and bore the Stroke. And is not here Fuel enough for Love to feed on? Doth not thy throbbing Heart stop here to ease itself, and, like *Joseph, seek for a Place to weep in?* Or do not the Tears of thy Love bedew these Lines? Go on then, for the Field of Love is large; it will be thy eternal Work to behold and love; nor needest thou want Work for thy present Meditation.

§ 12. How often hath thy Lord found thee, like *Hagar*, fainting, and weeping, and giving up thy Soul for

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for loſt, and He opened to thee a Well of Conſolation, and alſo opened thine Eyes to ſee it? How often, in the Poſture of *Elijah*, deſiring to die out of thy Miſery, and He hath ſpread thee a Table of unexpected Relief, and ſent thee on His Work refreſhed and encouraged? How often, in the Caſe of the Prophet's Servant, crying out, *Alas! what ſhall we do, for an Hoſt doth incompaſs us*; and He hath *opened thine Eyes to ſee more for thee, than againſt thee?* How often, like *Jonah*, peeviſh, and weary of thy Life, and He hath mildly ſaid, *doſt thou well to be angry* with me, or murmur againſt me? How often hath He ſet thee on *watching and praying*, repenting and believing, *and when He hath returned, hath found thee aſleep*, and yet hath covered thy Neglect with a Mantle of Love, and gently pleaded for thee, that *the Spirit is willing, but the Fleſh is weak?* Can thy Heart be cold, when thou thinkeſt of this? Can it contain, when thou remembereſt thoſe boundleſs Compaſſions? Thus, *Reader*, hold forth the Goodneſs of Chriſt to thy Heart; plead thus with thy frozen Soul, till, with *David*, thou canſt ſay, *my Heart was hot within me, while I was muſing, the Fire burned.* If this will not rouze up thy *Love*, thou haſt all Chriſt's perſonal Excellencies to add, all His particular Mercies to thyſelf, all His ſweet and near Relations to thee, and the Happineſs of thy everlaſting Abode with Him. Only follow them cloſe to thy Heart. Deal with it, as Chriſt did with *Peter*, when He thrice aſked him, *Loveſt thou me?* till he was *grieved*, and anſwers, *Lord, thou knoweſt that I love thee:* So grieve and ſhame thy Heart out of its Stupidity, till thou canſt truly ſay, "I "know, and my Lord knows, that I *love* Him."

§ 13. (2) *The next Affection to be excited in heavenly Contemplation, is Deſire.* The Object of it is Goodneſs conſidered as abſent, or not yet attained. If

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Love be hot, Desire will not be cold. Think with thyself, "What have I seen? O the incomprehensible Glory! O the transcendent Beauty! O blessed Souls that now enjoy it! who see a thousand Times more clearly, what I have seen at a Distance, and through dark interposing Clouds. What a Difference between my State and theirs! I am sighing, and they are singing. I am offending, and they are pleasing God. I am a Spectacle of Pity, like a *Job*, or a *Lazarus*, but they are perfect, and without Blemish. I am here entangled in the Love of the World, while they are swallowed up in the Love of God. They have none of my Cares and Fears; they weep not in secret; they languish not in Sorrows; these *Tears* are *wiped away from their Eyes*. O happy, a thousand Times happy Souls! Alas, that I must dwell in sinful Flesh, when my Brethren and Companions dwell with God! How far out of Sight and Reach of their high Enjoyments do I here live? What poor feeble Thoughts have I of God? What cold Affections toward him? How little have I of that Life, that Love, that Joy, in which they continually live? How soon doth that little depart, and leave me in thicker Darkness? Now and then a Spark falls upon my Heart, and while I gaze upon it, it dies, or rather my cold Heart quenches it. But they have their *Light in His Light*, and drink continually at the Spring of Joys. Here we are vexing each other with Quarrels, when they are of one Heart and Voice, and daily sound forth the Hallelujahs of Heaven with perfect Harmony. O what a Feast hath my Faith beheld, and what a Famine is yet in my Spirit! O blessed Souls! I may not, I dare not, envy your Happiness; I rather rejoice in my Brethren's Prosperity, and am glad

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" glad to think of the Day when I ſhall be admitted " into your Fellowſhip. I wiſh, not to diſplace you, " but to be ſo happy as to be with you. Why muſt " I ſtay, and weep, and wait? My Lord is gone; " He hath left this Earth, and is entered into His " Glory; my Brethren are gone; my Friends are " there; my Houſe, my Hope, my All is there. " When I am ſo far diſtant from my God, wonder " not *what aileth me*, if I now complain; an ignorant " *Micah* will do ſo for his Idol, and ſhall not my Soul " do ſo for the living God? Had I no Hope of En- " joyment, I would go hide myſelf in the Deſerts, " and lie and howl in ſome obſcure Wilderneſs, and " ſpend my Days in fruitleſs Wiſhes; but ſince it is " the Land of my promiſed Reſt, and the State I " muſt myſelf be advanced to, and my Soul draws " near, and is almoſt at it, I will love and long, I " will look and deſire, I will be breathing, How " long, Lord! how long wilt thou ſuffer this Soul " to pant and groan, and not open to him who waits, " and longs to be with thee!" Thus, *Chriſtian Reader*, let thy Thoughts aſpire, till thy Soul longs, as *David*, *O that one would give me to drink of the Wells of Salvation!* And till thou canſt ſay as he did, *I have longed for thy Salvation, O Lord* (b). And as the Mother and Brethren of Chriſt, when they could not come at Him becauſe of the Multitude, ſent to Him ſaying, *Thy Mother and Brethren ſtand without, deſiring to ſee thee*; ſo let thy Meſſage to Him be, and He will own thee; for He hath ſaid, *They that hear my Word, and do it, are my Mother, and my Brethren* (c).

§ 14. (3) *Another Affection to be exerciſed in heavenly Contemplation, is Hope.* This helps to ſupport the Soul under Sufferings, animates it to the greateſt Difficulties, gives it Firmneſs in the moſt ſhaking

(b) Pſalm cxix. 174. (c) Luke viii. 20, 21.

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Trials, enlivens it in Duties, and is the very Spring that sets all the Wheels a going. Who would believe, or strive for Heaven, if it were not for the Hope that he hath to obtain it? Who would pray, but for the Hope to prevail with God? If your Hope dies, your Duties die, your Endeavours die, your Joys die, and your Souls die. And if your Hope be not in Exercise, but asleep, it is next to dead. Therefore, *Christian Reader*, when thou art winding up thy Affections to Heaven, forget not to give one Lift to thy Hope. Think thus, and reason thus with thy own Heart; "Why should I not confidently and comfortably hope, when my Soul is in the Hands of so compassionate a Saviour? And when the Kingdom is at the Disposal of so bountiful a God? Did He ever discover the least Backwardness to my Good, or Inclination to my Ruin? Hath He not sworn, that *He delights not in the Death of him that dieth, but rather that he should repent and live?* Have not all His Dealings witnessed the same? Did He not mind me of my Danger, when I never feared it, because He would have me escape it? Did He not mind me of my Happiness, when I had no Thoughts of it, because He would have me enjoy it? How often hath He drawn me to Himself, and His Christ, when I have drawn backward? How hath His Spirit incessantly sollicited my Heart? And would He have done all this, if He had been willing that I should perish? Should I not hope, if an honest Man had promised me something in his Power? And shall I not hope, when I have the Covenant and Oath of God? It is true, the Glory is out of Sight; we have not beheld the Mansions of the Saints; but is not the Promise of God more certain than our Sight? *We* must not be *saved* by Sight, but *by Hope, and Hope that is seen is not Hope; for*

"*what*

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" *what a Man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if*
" *we hope for that we see not, then do we with Patience*
" *wait for it* (d). I have been ashamed of my Hope
" in an Arm of Flesh, but *Hope* in the Promise of
" God *maketh not ashamed* (e). In my greatest Suffer-
" ings I will say, *The Lord is my Portion, therefore*
" *will I hope in Him; the Lord is good unto them that*
" *wait for Him, to the Soul that seeketh Him. It is*
" *good that a Man should both hope and quietly wait for*
" *the Salvation of the Lord. For the Lord will not cast*
" *off for ever. But though He cause Grief, yet will*
" *He have Compassion, according to the Multitude of His*
" *Mercies* (f). Tho' I languish and die, yet will I
" hope; for *the Righteous hath Hope in his Death* (g).
" Tho' I must lie down in Dust and Darkness, yet
" there *my Flesh shall rest in Hope* (h). And when
" my Flesh hath nothing to rejoice in, yet will I
" *hold fast the Rejoicing of the Hope firm unto the End* (i);
" for *the Hope of the Righteous shall be Gladness* (k).
" Indeed, if I was myself to satisfy divine Justice,
" then there had been no Hope; but Christ hath
" *brought in a better Hope, by the which we draw nigh*
" *unto God* (l). Or, if I had to do with a feeble
" Creature, there were small Hope; for how could
" he raise this Body from the Dust, and lift me above
" the Sun? But what is this to the Almighty
" Power, which made the Heavens and the Earth
" out of nothing? Cannot that Power which raised
" Christ from the Dead, raise me? and that, which
" hath glorified the Head, glorify also the Members?
" *Doubtless, by the Blood of His Covenant, God will*
" *send forth His Prisoners out of the Pit wherein is no*
" *Water*; therefore will I *turn to the strong Hold*, as
" *a Prisoner of Hope* (m)."

(d) Rom. viii. 24, 25. (e) Rom. v. 5. (f) Lam. iii. 24--26, 31, 32.
(g) Prov. xiv. 32. (h) Ps. xvi. 9. (i) Heb. iii. 6.
(k) Prov. x. 28. (l) Heb. vii. 19. (m) Zech. ix. 11, 12.

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§ 15. (4) *Courage or Boldneſs is another Affection to be exerciſed in heavenly Contemplation.* It leadeth to Reſolution, and concludeth in Action. When you have raiſed your Love, Deſire, and Hope, go on, and think thus with yourſelf; "*Will God indeed dwell with Men?* And is there ſuch a Glory within the Reach of Hope? Why then do I not lay hold upon it? Where is the chearful Vigour of my Spirit? Why do I not *gird up the Loins of my Mind* (n)? Why don't I ſet upon my Enemies on every Side, and valiantly break through all Reſiſtance? What ſhould ſtop me, or intimidate me? Is God with me, or againſt me in the Work? Will Chriſt ſtand by me, or will He not? *If God* and Chriſt *be for me, who can be againſt me* (o)? In the Work of Sin, almoſt all Things are ready to help us, and only God and His Servants are againſt us, yet how ill doth that Work proſper in our Hands? But in my Courſe to Heaven, almoſt all Things are againſt me, but God is for me; and therefore how happily doth the Work ſucceed? Do I ſet upon this Work in my own Strength, or rather in the Strength of Chriſt my Lord? And *cannot I do all Things through Him that ſtrengthens me* (p)? Was He ever foiled by an Enemy? He hath indeed been aſſaulted, but was He ever conquered? Why then doth my Fleſh urge me with the Difficulties of the Work? Is any Thing too hard for Omnipotence? May not *Peter* boldly walk on the Sea, if Chriſt gives the Word of Command? If he begin to ſink, is it from the Weakneſs of Chriſt, or the Smallneſs of his Faith? Do I not well deſerve to be turned into Hell, if mortal Threats can drive me thither? Do I not well deſerve to be ſhut out of Heaven, if I will be frighted from thence with the Reproach of

(n) 1 Pet. i. 13. (o) Rom. viii. 31. (p) Phil. iv. 13.

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" of Tongues? What if it were *Father*, or *Mother*, " or *Husband*, or *Wife*, or the neareſt Friend I have " in the World, (if they may be called Friends that " would draw me to Damnation) ſhould I not for- " ſake all that would keep me from Chriſt? Will " their Friendſhip countervail the Enmity of God, " or be any Comfort to my condemned Soul? Shall " I be yielding to the Deſires of Men, and only " harden myſelf againſt the Lord? Let them beſeech " me upon their Knees, I will ſcorn to ſtop my " Courſe to behold them; I will ſhut my Ears to their " Cries: Let them flatter, or frown; let them draw " out Tongues or Swords againſt me; I am reſolved " in the Strength of Chriſt to break through, and " look upon them as Duſt: If they would entice me " with Preferment, even with the Kingdoms of the " World, I will no more regard them than the Dung " of the Earth. O bleſſed Reſt! O glorious State! " Who would ſell thee for Dreams and Shadows? " Who would be enticed or affrighted from thee? " Who would not ſtrive, and fight, and watch, and " run, and that with Violence, even to the laſt " Breath, in order to obtain thee? Surely none, " but thoſe that know thee not, and believe not thy " Glory."

§ 16. (5) *The laſt Affection to be exerciſed in heavenly Contemplation, is Joy.* Love, Deſire, Hope, and Courage, all tend to raiſe our Joy. This is ſo deſirable to every Man by Nature, and ſo eſſentially neceſſary to conſtitute our Happineſs, that, I hope, I need not ſay much to perſuade you to any Thing that would make your Life delightful. Suppoſing you therefore already convinced, that the Pleaſures of the Fleſh are bruti ſh and periſhing, and that your ſolid and laſting Joy muſt be from Heaven, inſtead of perſuading, I ſhall proceed in directing. *Reader*, if

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thou haſt managed well the former Work, thou art got within Sight of thy Reſt; thou believeſt the Truth of it; thou art convinced of its Excellency; thou art fallen in love with it; thou longeſt after it; thou hopeſt for it; and thou art reſolved to venture courageouſly for obtaining it. But is here any Work for Joy in this? We delight in the Good we poſſeſs; it is preſent Good that is the Object of Joy; and thou wilt ſay, "Alas! I am yet without it." But think a little farther with thyſelf. Is it nothing to have a Deed of Gift from God? Are His infallible Promiſes no Ground of Joy? Is it nothing to live in daily Expectation of entering into the Kingdom? Is not my Aſſurance of being hereafter glorified, a ſufficient Ground for inexpreſſible Joy? Is it not a Delight to the Heir of a Kingdom, to think of what he muſt ſoon poſſeſs, though at preſent he little differ from a Servant? Have we not both Command, and Example, for *rejoicing in Hope of the Glory of God* (q)?

§ 17. HERE then, *Reader*, take thy Heart once more, and carry it to the Top of the higheſt Mount; *ſhew it the Kingdom of Chriſt, and the Glory of it*, and ſay to it, "*All this will thy Lord give thee*, who haſt "*believed in Him*, and been a *Worſhipper of Him. It* "*is the Father's good Pleaſure to give thee this King-*"*dom* (r). Seeſt thou this aſtoniſhing Glory which "is above thee? All this is thy own Inheritance. "This Crown is thine, theſe Pleaſures are thine, "this Company, this beautiful Place, all are thine; "becauſe thou art Chriſt's, and Chriſt is thine; "when thou waſt united to Him, thou hadſt all theſe "with Him." Thus take thy Heart into *the Land of Promiſe*; ſhew it the pleaſant Hills, and fruitful Vallies; ſhew it the Cluſters of Grapes which thou haſt gathered, to convince it that it is a bleſſed Land, *flowing*

(q) Rom. v. 2. xii. 12. (r) Luke xii. 32.

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flowing with better than *Milk and Honey:* Enter the Gates of the *holy City*; walk thro' the Streets of the *new Jerusalem*; *walk about Sion, and go round about her*; *tell the Towers thereof*; *mark well her Bulwarks*; *consider her Palaces*; *that thou mayst tell it to* thy Soul (s). *Hath* it not *the Glory of God, and* is not *her Light like unto a Stone most precious, even like a Jasper Stone, clear as Crystal?* See the *twelve Foundations of her Walls, and in them the Names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb. And the Building of the Walls of it are of Jasper*; *and the City is pure Gold, like unto clear Glass*; *and the Foundations are garnished with all Manner of precious Stones. And the twelve Gates are twelve Pearls, every several Gate is of one Pearl*; *and the Street of the City is pure Gold, as it were transparent Glass. There is no Temple in it*; *for the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb, are the Temple of it. It hath no need of the Sun, neither of the Moon in it*; *for the Glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the Light thereof*; *and the Nations of them which are saved, shall walk in the Light of it. These Sayings are faithful and true: And the Lord God of the holy Prophets sent His Angels*, and His own Son, *to shew unto His Servants the Things which must shortly be done* (t). Say now to all this, "This is thy Rest, "O my Soul! And this must be the Place of thy "everlasting Habitation. *Let* all the Sons of *Sion* "*rejoice, let the Daughters of Jerusalem be glad*; for "*great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the City* "*of our God, in the Mountain of His Holiness. Beau-* "*tiful for Situation, the Joy of the whole Earth is* "*Mount Sion. God is known in her Palaces for a* "*Refuge* (u)."

§ 18. YET proceed on. The Soul that loves, ascends frequently, and runs familiarly thro' the Streets of

(s) Psalm xlviii. 12, 13. (t) Rev. xxi. 11--24. xxii. 6.
(u) Psalm xlviii. 11. 1--3.

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of the *heavenly Jerusalem*, visiting the *Patriarchs* and *Prophets*, saluting the *Apostles*, and admiring the Armies of *Martyrs*: So do thou lead on thy Heart as from Street to Street; bring it into the Palace of the Great King; lead it, as it were, from Chamber to Chamber. Say to it, "Here must I lodge; here "must I live; here must I praise; here must I love, "and be beloved. I must shortly be one of this hea-"venly Choir, and be better skilled in the Musick. "Among this blessed Company must I take up my "Place; my Voice must join to make up the Me-"lody. My Tears will then be wiped away; my "Groans be turned to another Tune; my Cottage "of Clay be changed to this Palace; my Prison-"Rags to these splendid Robes; and my sordid Flesh "shall be put off, and such a Sun-like spiritual Body "be put on: *For the former Things are* here *passed* "*away* (w). *Glorious Things are spoken of thee, O* "*City of God* (x)! When I look upon this glorious "Place, what a Dungbill and Dungeon, methinks, "is Earth? O what Difference betwixt a Man "feeble, pained, groaning, dying, rotting in the "Grave, and one of these triumphant, shining "Saints? Here shall I *drink of the River of Pleasures*, "*the Streams whereof make glad the City of God* (y). "Must *Israel*, under the Bondage of the Law, *serve* "*the Lord with Joyfulness, and with Gladness of Heart,* "*for the Abundance of all Things* (z)? Surely I shall "serve Him with Joyfulness and Gladness of Heart, "for the Abundance of Glory. Did persecuted "Saints *take joyfully the spoiling of their Goods* (a)? "And shall not I take joyfully such a full Reparation "of all my Losses? Was it a celebrated *Day*, *wherein* "*the Jews rested from their Enemies*, because it *was*

"*turned*

(w) Rev. xxi. 4. (x) Psalm lxxxvii. 3. (y) Ps. xxxvi. 8. xlvi. 4.
(z) Deut. xxviii. 47. (a) Heb. x. 34.

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" *turned unto them from Sorrow to Joy, and from* " *Mourning into a good Day* (b)? What a Day then " will that be to my Soul, whose Rest and Change " will be unconceivably greater? *When the wise* " *Men saw the Star* that led to Christ, *they rejoiced* " *with exceeding great Joy* (c): But I shall shortly " see Him, who is Himself *the bright and Morning-* " *Star* (d). If the Disciples *departed from the Sepul-* " *chre with great Joy*, when they had but heard that " their Lord *was risen from the dead* (e); what will " be my Joy, when I shall see Him reigning in " Glory, and myself raised to a blessed Communion " with Him? Then shall I indeed have *Beauty for* " *Ashes, the Oil of Joy for Mourning, and the Gar-* " *ment of Praise for the Spirit of Heaviness*; and *Sion* " shall be *made an eternal Excellency, a Joy of many* " *Generations* (f). Why then do I not arise from the " Dust, and cease my Complaints? Why do I not " trample on vain Delights, and feed on the foreseen " Delights of Glory? Why is not my Life a con- " tinual Joy, and the Savour of Heaven perpetually " upon my Spirit?"

§ 19. LET me here observe, that there is no Necessity to exercise *these Affections*, either exactly *in this Order*, or all *at one Time*. Sometimes one of thy Affections may need more exciting, or may be more lively than the rest; or, if thy Time be short, one may be exercised one Day, and another upon the next; all which must be left to thy Prudence to determine. Thou hast also an Opportunity, if inclined to make use of it, to exercise *opposite* and more *mixed Affections*; such as,——*Hatred of Sin*, which would deprive thy Soul of these immortal Joys;——*godly Fear*, lest thou shouldst abuse thy Mercy;——*godly Shame*

(b) Esth. ix. 22. (c) Matt. ii. 10. (d) Rev. xxii. 16.
(e) Matt. xxviii. 7, 8. (f) Is. lxi. 3. lx. 15.

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Shame and Grief, for having abuſed it;——*unfeigned Repentance*;——*Self-Indignation*;——*Jealouſy over thy Heart*;——and *Pity* for thoſe who are in Danger of loſing theſe immortal Joys.

§ 20. (III) *We are alſo to take Notice, how heavenly Contemplation is promoted by Soliloquy and Prayer.* Tho' Conſideration be the chief Inſtrument in this Work, yet, by itſelf, it is not ſo likely to affect the Heart. In this Reſpect Contemplation is like Preaching, where the mere explaining of Truths and Duties is ſeldom attended with ſuch Succeſs, as the lively Application of them to the Conſcience; and eſpecially when a divine Bleſſing is earneſtly ſought for to accompany ſuch Application.

§ 21. (1) *By Soliloquy, or a pleading the Caſe with thyſelf, thou muſt in thy Meditation quicken thy own Heart.* Enter into a ſerious Debate with it. Plead with it in the moſt moving and affecting Language, and urge it with the moſt powerful and weighty Arguments. It is what holy Men of God have practiſed in all Ages. Thus *David, Why art thou caſt down, O my Soul! And why art thou diſquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I ſhall yet praiſe Him, who is the Health of my Countenance, and my God* (g). And again, *Bleſs the Lord, O my Soul! and all that is within me, bleſs His holy Name. Bleſs the Lord, O my Soul! and forget not all His Benefits*, &c. (h). This *Soliloquy* is to be made uſe of according to the ſeveral Affections of the Soul, and according to its ſeveral Neceſſities. It is a preaching to one's Self: For as every good Maſter or Father of a Family is a good Preacher to his own Family; ſo every good Chriſtian is a good Preacher to his own Soul. Therefore the very ſame Method which a Miniſter ſhould uſe in his preaching to others, every Chriſtian ſhould endeavour after in ſpeak-

(g) Pſalm xlii. 11. (h) Pſalm ciii. 1--5.

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ſpeaking to himſelf. Obſerve the Matter and Manner of the moſt Heart-affecting Miniſter; let him be as a Pattern for your Imitation; and the ſame Way that he takes with the Hearts of his People, do thou alſo take with thy own Heart. Do this in thy heavenly Contemplation; explain to thyſelf the Things on which thou doſt meditate; confirm thy Faith in them from Scripture; and then apply them to thyſelf, according to their Nature, and thy own Neceſſity. There is no Need to object againſt this, from a Senſe of thy own Inability. Doth not God command thee to *teach the Scriptures diligently unto thy Children, and talk of them when thou ſitteſt in thine Houſe, and when thou walkeſt by the Way, and when thou lieſt down, and when thou riſeſt up* (i)? And if thou muſt have ſome Ability to teach thy Children, much more to teach thyſelf; and if thou canſt talk of divine Things to others, why not alſo to thine own Heart?

§ 22. (2) *Heavenly Contemplation is alſo promoted, by ſpeaking to God in Prayer*; as well as by ſpeaking to ourſelves in Soliloquy. *Ejaculatory Prayer* may very properly be intermixed with *Meditation*, as a Part of the Duty. How often do we find *David*, in the ſame *Pſalm*, ſometimes pleading with his Soul, and ſometimes with God? The *Apoſtle* bids us *ſpeak to ourſelves in Pſalms, and Hymns, and ſpiritual Songs* (k); and no doubt we may alſo ſpeak to God in them. This keeps the Soul ſenſible of the divine Preſence, and tends greatly to quicken and raiſe it. As God is the higheſt Object of our Thoughts, ſo our viewing of Him, ſpeaking to Him, and pleading with Him, more elevates the Soul, and excites the Affections, than any other Part of *Meditation*. Tho' we remain unaffected, while we plead the Caſe with ourſelves; yet, when we turn our Speech to God, it may ſtrike us

(i) Deut. vi. 7. (k) Epheſ. v. 19.

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us with Awe; and the Holineſs and Majeſty of Him whom we ſpeak to, may cauſe both the Matter and Words to pierce the deeper. When we read, that *Iſaac went out to meditate in the Field*, the Margin ſays, *to pray*; for the *Hebrew* Word ſignifies both. Thus, in our *Meditations*, to intermix *Soliloquy* and *Prayer*; ſometimes ſpeaking to our own *Hearts*, and ſometimes to *God*, is, I apprehend, the higheſt Step we can advance to in this heavenly Work. Nor ſhould we imagine, it will be as well to take up with *Prayer* alone, and lay aſide *Meditation*. For they are diſtinct Duties, and muſt both of them be performed. We need one, as well as the other, and therefore ſhall wrong ourſelves by neglecting either. Beſides, the Mixture of them, like Muſick, will be more engaging; as the one ſerves to put Life into the other. And our ſpeaking to ourſelves in *Meditation*, ſhould go before our ſpeaking to God in *Prayer*. For want of attending to this due Order, Men ſpeak to God with far leſs Reverence and Affection than they would ſpeak to an Angel, if he ſhould appear to them; or to a Judge, if they were ſpeaking for their Lives. Speaking to the God of Heaven in Prayer, is a weightier Duty than moſt are aware of.

CHAP.

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CHAP. XV.

Heavenly Contemplation assisted by sensible Objects, and guarded against a treacherous Heart.

§ 1. *As it is difficult to maintain a lively Impression of heavenly Things, therefore* § 2. (I) *heavenly Contemplation may be assisted by sensible Objects*; § 3. (1) *if we draw strong Suppositions from Sense*; *and* § 4—11. (2) *if we compare the Objects of Sense with the Objects of Faith, several Instances of which are produced.* § 12. (II) *Heavenly Contemplation may also be guarded against a treacherous Heart, by considering*, § 13, 14. (1) *the great Backwardness of the Heart to this Duty*, § 15. (2) *its trifling in it*, § 16. (3) *its wandering from it*, *and* § 17. (4) *its abruptly putting an End to it.*

§ 1. THE most difficult Part of *heavenly Contemplation*, is to maintain a lively Sense of heavenly Things upon our Hearts. It is easier, merely to think of Heaven a whole Day, than to be lively and affectionate in those Thoughts a Quarter of an Hour. *Faith* is imperfect, for we are renewed but *in Part*; and goes against a World of Resistance; and, being supernatural, is prone to decline and languish, unless it be continually excited. *Sense* is strong, according to the Strength of the Flesh; and being natural, continues while Nature continues. The Objects of Faith are far off; but those of Sense are nigh.

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nigh. We must go as far as Heaven for our Joys. To rejoice in what we never saw, nor ever knew the Man that did see, and this upon a mere Promise in the Bible; is not so easy, as to rejoice in what we see and possess. It must therefore be a Point of spiritual Prudence, to call in Sense to the Assistance of Faith. It will be a good Work, if we can *make Friends* of these usual Enemies, and make them Instruments for raising us to God, which are so often the Means of drawing us from Him. Why hath God given us either our Senses, or their common Objects, if they might not be serviceable to His Praise? Why doth the Holy Spirit describe the Glory of the *new Jerusalem*, in Expressions that are even grateful to the Flesh? Is it that we might think Heaven to be made of *Gold* and *Pearl?* or that Saints and Angels *eat* and *drink?* No, but to help us to conceive of them as we are able, and to use these borrowed Phrases as a Glass, in which we must see the Things themselves imperfectly represented, till we come to an immediate and perfect Sight.——And besides shewing *how heavenly Contemplation may be assisted by sensible Objects*,——this Chapter will also shew *how it may be preserved from a wandering Heart.*

§ 2. (1) In order that *heavenly Contemplation* may be *assisted by sensible Objects*, let me only advise——to *draw strong Suppositions from Sense*,——and to *compare the Objects of Sense with Objects of Faith.*

§ 3. (1) *For the helping of thy Affections in heavenly Contemplation, draw as strong Suppositions as possible from thy Senses.* Think on the Joys above, as boldly as Scripture hath expressed them. Bring down thy Conceptions to the Reach of Sense. Both Love and Joy are promoted by familiar Acquaintance. When we attempt to think of God and Glory, without the Scripture-Manner of representing them, we are lost,

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and have nothing to fix our Thoughts upon; we set them so far from us, that our Thoughts are strange, and we are ready to say, What is above us, is nothing to us. To conceive of God and Glory, only as above our Conception, will beget but little Love; or as above our Love, will produce little Joy. Therefore put Christ no farther from you, than He hath put Himself, lest the divine Nature be again inaccessible. Think of Christ, as in our own glorified Nature. Think of glorified Saints, as Men made perfect. Suppose thyself a Companion with *John* in his Survey of the *new Jerusalem*, and viewing the Thrones, the Majesty, the heavenly Hosts, the shining Splendor, which he saw. Suppose thyself his Fellow-Traveller into the celestial Kingdom, and that thou hadst seen all the Saints in their *white Robes*, with *Palms in their Hands*; and that thou hadst heard those *Songs of Moses, and of the Lamb*. If thou hadst really seen and heard these Things, in what a Rapture wouldst thou have been? And the more seriously thou puttest this Supposition to thyself, the more will thy Meditation elevate thy Heart. Don't, like the *Papists*, draw them in Pictures; but get the livelieſt Picture of them in thy Mind that thou possibly canst, by contemplating the Scripture-Account of them, till thou canst say, "Methinks I see a Glimpse of Glory! "Methinks I hear the Shouts of Joy and Praise, and "even stand by *Abraham* and *David*, *Peter* and *Paul*, "and other triumphant Souls! Methinks I even see "the Son of God appearing in the Clouds, and the "World standing at His Bar to receive their Doom; "and hear Him say, *Come ye blessed of my Father*; "and see them go rejoicing into the Joy of their "Lord! My very Dreams of these Things have "sometimes greatly affected me, and should not these "just Suppositions much more affect me? What

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" if I had seen, with *Paul*, those *unutterable Things!* " Or, with *Stephen*, had seen *Heaven opened, and* " *Christ sitting at the right Hand of God?* Surely that " one Sight was worth his Storm of Stones. What " if I had seen, as *Micaiah* did, *the Lord sitting upon* " *His Throne, and all the Host of Heaven standing on* " *His right Hand, and on His left?* Such Things " did these Men of God see; and I shall shortly see " far more than ever they saw, till they were loosed " from Flesh, as I must be." Thus you see how it excites our Affections in this heavenly Work, if we make strong and familiar Suppositions from our bodily Senses, concerning the State of Blessedness, as the Spirit hath in condescending Language expressed it.

§ 4. (2) *The other Way in which our Senses may promote this heavenly Work, is, by comparing the Objects of Sense with the Objects of Faith.* As for Instance: ——*You may strongly argue with your Hearts, from the corrupt Delights of sensual Men, to the Joys above.* Think with yourselves; " Is it such a Delight to " a Sinner to do wickedly? And will it not be de- " lightful indeed to live with God? Hath the Drun- " kard such Delight in his Cups, that the Fears of " Damnation will not make him forsake them? Will " the Whoremaster rather part with his Credit, " Estate, and Salvation, than with his brutish De- " light? If the Way to Hell can afford such Plea- " sure, what then are the Pleasures of the Saints in " Heaven? If the covetous Man hath so much Plea- " sure in his Wealth, and the ambitious Man in " Places of Power and Titles of Honour; what then " have the Saints in everlasting Treasures, and in " heavenly Honours, where we shall be set above " Principalities and Powers, and be made the glo- " rious Spouse of Christ? How delightfully will

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" the Voluptuous follow their Recreations from " Morning to Night, or sit at their Cards and Dice, " Nights and Days together? O the Delight we " shall have, when we come to our Rest, in beholding the Face of the living God, and in singing " forth Praises to Him and the Lamb!"——*Compare also the Delights above, with the lawful and moderate Delights of Sense.* Think with thyself, " How sweet " is Food to my Taste when I am hungry; especially " if it be, as *Isaac* said, *such as I love*, which my " Temperance and Appetite incline to? What " Delight then must my Soul have in feeding upon " *Christ*, *the living Bread*, and in *eating with Him at His Table in His Kingdom?* Was a *Mess of Pottage* " so sweet to *Esau* in his Hunger, that he would buy " it at so dear a Rate as his *Birth-right?* How highly " then should I value this never-perishing Food? " How pleasant is Drink in the Extremity of Thirst, " scarcely to be expressed; enough to make the " *Strength of Sampson revive?* O how delightful will " it be to my Soul to drink of that *Fountain of living* " *Water*, *which whoso drinketh it shall thirst no more?* " How delightful are grateful Odours to the Smell; " or Musick to the Ear; or beautiful Sights to the " Eye? What Fragrance then hath *the precious Ointment which is poured on the Head* of our glorified " Saviour, and which must be poured on the Head of " all His Saints, and will fill all Heaven with its " Odour? How delightful is the Musick *of the heavenly Host?* How pleasing will be those real Beauties above? How glorious the *Building not made* " *with Hands*, the House that God Himself dwells " in, the Walks and Prospects in *the City of God*, " and the celestial *Paradise!*"

§ 5.——*Compare also the Delights above, with those we find in natural Knowledge.* These are far beyond the

the Delights of Sense; but how much farther are the Delights of Heaven? Think then, "Can an *Archimedes* be so taken up with his mathematical Invention, that the Threats of Death cannot disengage him, but he will die in the Midst of his Contemplations? Should I not be much more taken up with the Delights of Glory, and die with these Contemplations fresh upon my Soul; especially when my Death will perfect my Delights, while those of *Archimedes* die with him? What exquisite Pleasure is it to dive into the Secrets of Nature, and find out the Mystery of Arts and Sciences; especially if we make a new Discovery in any one of them? What high Delights are there then in the Knowledge of God and Christ? If the Face of human Learning be so beautiful, as to make sensual Pleasures appear base and brutish; how beautiful then is the Face of God? When we meet with some choice Book, how could we read it Day and Night, almost forgetful of Meat, Drink, or Sleep? What Delights are there then at God's right Hand, where we shall know in a Moment all that is to be known?"——*Compare also the Delights above, with the Delights of Morality, and of the natural Affections.* What Delight had many sober *Heathens* in the Rules and Practice of *moral* Duties, so that they took him alone for an honest Man, who did well through the Love of Virtue, and not merely for fear of Punishment; yea, so much valued was this *moral* Virtue, that they thought Man's chief Happiness consisted in it? Think then, "What Excellency will there be in our heavenly Perfection, and in that uncreated Perfection of God which we shall behold? What Sweetness is there in the Exercise of natural Love, whether to Children, Parents, Yoke-Fellows, or intimate Friends? Does

David

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" *David* say of *Jonathan*, *thy Love to me was wonder-*
" *ful, passing the Love of Women?* Did *the Soul of*
" *Jonathan cleave to David?* Had Christ Himself
" one *Disciple whom He especially loved, and who was*
" *wont to lean on His Breast?* If then the Delights
" of close and cordial Friendship be so great, what
" Delight shall we have in the Friendship of the
" most High, and in our mutual Intimacy with
" Jesus Christ, and in the dearest Love of the Saints?
" Surely this will be a stricter Friendship, and these
" more lovely and desirable Friends, than ever the
" Sun beheld; and both our Affections to our Father
" and Saviour, and especially theirs to us, will be
" such as we never knew here. If one Angel could
" destroy an Host, the Affections of Spirits must also
" be proportionably stronger, so that we shall then
" love a thousand Times more ardently than we can
" now. As all the Attributes and Works of God are
" incomprehensible, so is this of Love: He will love
" us infinitely beyond our most perfect Love to
" Him. What then will there be in this mutual
" Love?"

§ 6.——*Compare also the Excellencies of Heaven, with those glorious Works of Creation which our Eyes now behold.* What Wisdom, Power, and Goodness, are manifested therein? How does the Majesty of the Creator shine in this Fabrick of the World? *His Works are great, sought out of all them that have Pleasure therein.* What divine Skill in forming the Bodies of Men or Beasts? What Excellency in every Plant? What Beauty in Flowers? What Variety and Usefulness in Herbs, Fruits, and Minerals? What Wonders are contained in the Earth and its Inhabitants; the Ocean of Waters, with its Motions and Dimensions; and the constant Succession of Spring and Autumn, of Summer and Winter? Think then,

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" If these Things, which are but Servants to sinful " Man, are so full of mysterious Worth, what is " that Place where God Himself dwells, and which " is prepared for *just Men made perfect* with Christ? " What Glory is there in the least of yonder Stars? " What a vast resplendent Body is yonder Moon, " and every Planet? What an inconceivable Glory " hath the Sun? But all this is nothing to the Glory " of Heaven. Yonder Sun must there be laid aside " as useless. Yonder is but Darkness to the Lustre " of my Father's House. I shall myself be as glo- " rious as that Sun. This whole Earth is but my " Father's Footstool. This Thunder is nothing to " His dreadful Voice. These Winds are nothing to " the Breath of His Mouth. If the *sending Rain, and* " *making the Sun to rise on the Just, and on the Unjust,* " be so wonderful; how much more wonderful and " glorious will that Sun be, which must shine on " none but Saints and Angels?"——*Compare also the Enjoyments above, with the Wonders of Providence in the Church and World.* Would it not be an astonishing Sight, to see *the Sea stand as a Wall on the right Hand, and on the left, and the dry Land appear in the Midst, and the People of Israel pass safely through, and Pharoah and his Host drowned?* or to have seen the ten *Plagues of Egypt?* or *the Rock gushing forth Streams?* or *Manna and Quails rained from Heaven?* or *the Earth opening and swallowing up the Wicked?* But we shall see far greater Things than these; not only Sights more wonderful, but more delightful: There shall be no Blood, nor Wrath, intermingled; nor shall we cry out, as *the Men of Beth-shemesh, Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?* How astonishing, to see *the Sun stand still* in the Firmament; or *the Dial of Ahaz go back ten Degrees?* But we shall see when *there shall be no Sun*; or rather shall behold for ever a Sun of infinitely

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nitely greater Brightness. What a Life should we live, if we could have *Drought or Rain* at our Prayers; or have *Fire from Heaven* to destroy our Enemies, as *Elijah* had; or raise the Dead, as *Elisha*; or miraculously *cure Diseases*, and *speak all Languages*, as the *Apostles?* Alas, these are nothing to the Wonders we shall see and possess with God; and all of them Wonders of Goodness and Love! We shall ourselves be the Subjects of more wonderful Mercies than any of these. *Jonah* was raised but from a three Day's Burial *in the Belly of a Fish*; but we shall be raised from many Years Rottenness and Dust; and that Dust exalted to the Glory of the Sun; and that Glory perpetuated through Eternity. Surely, if we observe but common Providences; as, the Motions of the Sun; the Tides of the Sea; the standing of the Earth; the watering it with Rain, as a Garden; the keeping in Order a wicked confused World; with many others; they are all admirable. But what are these to the *Sion* of God, the Vision of the divine Majesty, and the Order of the heavenly Hosts?——Add to these, *those particular Providences which thou hast thyself enjoyed and recorded through thy Life, and compare them with the Mercies thou shalt have above.* Look over the Mercies of thy Youth and riper Age, of thy Prosperity and Adversity, of thy several Places and Relations; are they not excellent and innumerable, rich and engaging? How sweet was it to thee, when God resolved thy Doubts; scattered thy Fears; prevented the Inconveniencies into which thy own Counsel would have cast thee; eased thy Pains; healed thy Sickness; and raised thee up, as from Death and the Grave? Think then, "Are all these so sweet "and precious, that without them my Life would "have been a perpetual Misery? Hath His Provi- "dence on Earth lifted me so high, *and His Genti-*

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" *ness made me great?* How sweet then will His glo-
" rious Presence be? How high will His eternal
" Love exalt me? And how great shall I be made in
" Communion with His Greatness? If my Pilgri-
" mage and Warfare have such Mercies, what shall
" I find in my Home, and in my Triumph? If God
" communicates so much to me, while I remain a
" Sinner; what will He bestow when I am a perfected
" Saint? If I have had so much at such a Distance
" from Him; what shall I have in His immediate
" Presence, where I shall ever stand before His
" Throne?"

§ 7.——*Compare the Joys above, with the Comforts thou hast here received in Ordinances.* Hath not the *Bible* been to thee as an open Fountain, flowing with Comforts Day and Night? What suitable Promises have come into thy Mind; so that, with *David*, thou mayst say, *Unless thy Law had been my Delight, I should then have perished in mine Affliction?* Think then, " If His *Word* be so full of Consolations, what over-
" flowing Springs shall we find in God Himself? If
" His Letters are so comfortable, what will the
" Glories of His Presence be? If the Promise is so
" so sweet, what will the Performance be? If the
" *Testament* of our Lord, and our Charter for the
" Kingdom, be so comfortable, what will be our
" Possession of the Kingdom itself?"——Think far-
ther, " What Delights have I also found in the
" *Word preached?* When I have sat under a heavenly,
" Heart-searching Teacher, how hath my Heart
" been warmed? Methinks I have felt myself almost
" in Heaven. How often have I gone to the Con-
" gregation troubled in Spirit, and returned joyful?
" How often have I gone doubting, and God hath
" sent me home persuaded of His Love in Christ?
" What Cordials have I met with to animate me in

" every

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every Conflict? If but the Face of *Moses* shine so
gloriously, what Glory is there in the Face of
God? If *the Feet of them that publish Peace, that*
bring good Tidings of Salvation, be beautiful; how
beautiful is the Face of the Prince of Peace? If
this Treasure be so precious *in earthen Vessels*; what
is that Treasure laid up in Heaven? *Blessed are*
the Eyes that see what is seen there, *and the Ears*
that hear the Things that are heard there. There
shall I hear *Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, John, Peter,*
Paul; not preaching to Gainsayers, in Imprison-
ment, Persecution, and Reproach; but triumph-
ing in the Praises of Him that hath raised them to
Honour and Glory."——Think also, "What
Joy is it to have Access and Acceptance in *Prayer*;
that I may always go to God, and open my Case,
and unbosom my Soul to Him, as to my most
faithful Friend? But it will be a more unspeaka-
ble Joy, when I shall receive all Blessings without
asking, and all my Necessities and Miseries will
be removed, and when God Himself will be the
Portion and Inheritance of my Soul."——As for
the *Lord's Supper*, "What a Privilege is it to be
admitted to sit at His Table, to have His Covenant
sealed to me there? But all the Life and Comfort
there, is to assure me of the Comforts hereafter.
O the Difference between the last Supper of Christ
on Earth, and the Marriage-Supper of the Lamb
at the great Day! Then His *Room* will be the
glorious Heavens; His *Attendants*, all the Hosts of
Angels and Saints; no *Judas*, no unfurnished
Guest, comes there; but the humble Believers
must sit down by Him, and their *Feast* will be their
mutual loving and rejoicing."——Concerning the
Communion of Saints, think with thyself, "What a
Pleasure is it to live with intelligent and heavenly

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" Chriſtians? *David* ſays of ſuch, *they were all his*
" *Delight.* O what a delightful Society then ſhall I
" have above? Had I but ſeen *Job* on the Dunghill,
" what a Mirror of Patience? and what will it be
" to ſee him in Glory? How delightful to have heard
" *Paul* and *Silas* ſinging in the Stocks? How much
" more to hear them ſing Praiſes in Heaven? What
" Melody did *David* make on his Harp? But how
" much more melodious to hear that *ſweet Singer* in
" the heavenly Choir? What would I have given
" for an Hour's free Converſe with *Paul*, when he
" was juſt come down from the third Heaven? But
" I muſt ſhortly ſee thoſe Things myſelf, and poſſeſs
" what I ſee."——Once more, think of *praiſing God* in Concert with His Saints. " What if I had been
" in the Place of thoſe *Shepherds*, who ſaw, and
" heard, the heavenly Hoſt ſinging, *Glory to God in*
" *the higheſt, and on Earth Peace, good Will towards*
" *Men?* But I ſhall ſee and hear more glorious
" Things. How bleſſed ſhould I have thought my-
" ſelf, had I heard Chriſt in His *Thankſgivings to*
" *His Father?* How much more, when I ſhall hear
" Him pronounce me Bleſſed? If there was ſuch
" Joy at *bringing back the Ark*, or at *rebuilding the*
" *Temple*; what will there be in the *new Jeruſalem?*
" If *the Earth rent*, when the People rejoiced at *Solo-*
" *mon*'s Coronation; what a joyful Shout will there
" be at the appearing of the King of the Church?
" If, *when the Foundations of the Earth were laid, the*
" *Morning Stars ſang together, and all the Sons of God*
" *ſhouted for Joy*; what a joyful Song will there be,
" when the World of Glory is both founded and
" finiſhed, when the *Top Stone* is laid, and when
" *the holy City is adorned as the Bride, the Lamb's*
" *Wife?*"

§ 8.

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§ 8.——*Compare the Joy thou shalt have in Heaven, with what the Saints have found in the Way to it, and in the Foretastes of it.* When did God ever reveal the least of Himself to any of His Saints, but the Joy of their Hearts was answerable to the Revelation? In what an Extacy was *Peter* on the Mount of Transfiguration? *Master*, says he, *it is good for us to be here; let us make three Tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.* As if he had said, "O let us not go down again to yonder persecuting "Rabble; let us not return to our mean and suffer-"ing State. Is it not better to stay here now we are "here? Is not here better Company, and sweeter "Pleasure?" How was *Paul* lifted up with what he saw? How did the Face of *Moses* shine, when he had been talking with God? These were all extraordinary Foretastes; but little to the full beatifical Vision. How often have we read and heard of dying Saints, who have been as full of Joy as their Hearts could hold; and when their Bodies have felt the Extremity of Sickness and Pain, have had so much of Heaven in their Spirits, that their Joy hath far exceeded their Sorrows? If a Spark of this Fire be so glorious, even amidst the Sea of Adversity; what then is Glory itself? O the Joy that the *Martyrs* have felt in the Flames! They were Flesh and Blood, as well as we; it must therefore be some excellent Thing that filled their Spirits with Joy, while their Bodies were burning. Think, *Reader*, in thy Meditations, "Sure it must be some wonder-"ful Foretaste of Glory that made the Flames of "Fire easy, and the King of Terrors welcome. "What then is Glory itself? What a blessed Rest, "when the Thoughts of it made *Paul desire to depart,* "*and be with Christ*; and makes the Saints never "think themselves well, till they are dead? Shall

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" *Saunders* embrace the Stake, and cry, *Welcome* " *Cross?* And shall not I more delightfully embrace " my Blessedness, and cry, *Welcome Crown?* Shall " *Bradford* kiss the Faggot? And shall not I kiss the " Saviour? Shall another poor Martyr rejoice to " have her Foot in the same Hole of the Stocks, in " which Mr. *Philpot*'s had been before her? And " shall not I rejoice, that my Soul shall live in the " same Place of Glory, where Christ and His Apostles " are gone before me? Shall Fire and Faggot, Pri- " sons and Banishment, cruel Mockings and Scourg- " ings, be more welcome to others, than Christ and " Glory to me? God forbid."

§ 9.—*Compare the Glory of the heavenly Kingdom, with the Glory of the Church on Earth, and of Christ in His State of Humiliation.* If Christ suffering in the Room of Sinners had such Excellency, what is Christ at His Father's right Hand? If the Church under her Sins and Enemies have so much Beauty, what will she have at the Marriage of the Lamb? How wonderful was the Son of God in the Form of a Servant? When He is born, a new Star must appear, and conduct Strangers to worship Him in a Manger; heavenly Hosts with their Songs must celebrate His Nativity; while a Child, He must dispute with Doctors; when He enters upon His Office, He turns Water into Wine; feeds thousands with a few Loaves and Fishes; cleanses the Lepers, heals the Sick, restores the Lame, gives Sight to the Blind, and raises the Dead. How wonderful then is his celestial Glory? If there be such *cutting down of Boughs, and spreading of Garments, and crying Hosanna,* for one that *comes into Jerusalem riding on an Ass*; what will there be when He comes with His Angels in His Glory? If they that heard Him *preach the Gospel of the Kingdom,* confess, *Never Man spake like this Man*;

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Man; they then that behold His Majesty in His Kingdom, will say, *There was never Glory like this Glory.* If, when His Enemies came to apprehend Him, *they fell to the Ground*; if, when He is dying, *the Earth quakes, the Vail of the Temple is rent, the Sun eclipsed, the dead Bodies of the Saints arise, and the Standers-by acknowledge, verily this was the Son of God:* O what a Day will it be, when the Dead must all arise, and stand before Him; when *He will once more shake, not the Earth only, but the Heavens also*; when this Sun shall be taken out of the Firmament, and be everlastingly darkened with His Glory; and when every Tongue shall confess Him to be Lord and King! If, when He rose again, Death and the Grave lost their Power; if Angels must *roll away the Stone*, terrify *the Keepers* till they are *as dead Men*, and send the Tidings to His Disciples; if He ascend to Heaven in their Sight; what Power, Dominion, and Glory, is He now possessed of, and which we must for ever possess with Him! When He is gone, can a few poor Fishermen and Tentmakers cure the Lame, Blind, and Sick, open Prisons, destroy the Disobedient, raise the Dead, and astonish their Adversaries? What a World will that be, where every one can do greater Works than these! If the preaching of the Gospel be accompanied with such Power as to discover the Secrets of the Heart, humble the proud Sinner, and make the most obdurate tremble; if it can make Men *burn their Books, sell their Lands, bring in the Price, and lay it down at the* Preacher's *Feet*; if it can convert thousands, and *turn the World upside down*; if its Doctrine, from the Prisoner at the Bar, can make the Judge on the Bench tremble; if Christ and His Saints have this Power and Honour in the Day of their Abasement, and in the Time appointed for their Suffering and Disgrace; what then will they

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have in their absolute Dominion, and full Advancement in their Kingdom of Glory?

§ 10.——*Compare the glorious Change thou shalt have at last, with the gracious Change which the Spirit hath here wrought on thy Heart.* There is not the smallest sincere Grace in thee, but is of greater Worth than the Riches of the *Indies*; not a hearty Desire and Groan after Christ, but is more to be valued than the Kingdoms of the World. A renewed Nature is the very *Image of God*; *Christ dwelling in us*; and *the Spirit of God abiding in us:* It is a Beam from the Face of God; *the Seed of God remaining in us*; the only inherent Beauty of the rational Soul: It enobles Man above all Nobility; fits him to understand his Maker's Pleasure, do His Will, and receive His Glory. If this *Grain of Mustard-Seed* be so precious, what is *the Tree of Life in the Midst of the Paradise of God?* If a Spark of Life, which will but strive against Corruptions, and flame out a few Desires and Groans, be of so much Worth; how glorious then is the Fountain of this Life? If we are said to be *like God*, when we are pressed down with a Body of Sin; sure we shall be much more like God, when we have no such Thing as Sin within us. Is the Desire after, and Love of, Heaven so excellent; what then is the Thing itself? Is our Joy in foreseeing and believing so sweet; what will be the Joy of full Possession? How glad is a Christian when he feels his Heart begin to melt, and be dissolved with the Thoughts of sinful Unkindness? Even this Sorrow yields him Joy. O what then will it be, when we shall know, and love, and rejoice, and praise in the highest Perfection? Think with thyself, "What a Change was it, to be "taken from that State wherein I was born, and in "which I was rivetted by Custom, when thousands "of

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" of Sins lay upon my Score, and if I had so died I " had been damned for ever? What an astonishing " Change, to be justified from all these enormous " Crimes, and freed from all these fearful Plagues, " and made an Heir of Heaven? How often, when " I have thought of my Regeneration, have I cried " out, O blessed Day! and blessed be the Lord that " ever I saw it! How then shall I cry out in Hea- " ven, O blessed Eternity! and blessed be the Lord " that brought me to it! Did the Angels of God " rejoice to see my Conversion? Surely they will " congratulate my Felicity in my Salvation. Grace " is but a Spark raked up in the Ashes, covered " with Flesh from the Sight of the World, and " sometimes covered with Corruption from my " own Sight; but my everlasting Glory will not " be so clouded, nor my Light be *under a Bushel*, " *but upon a Hill*, even upon Mount *Sion*, the " Mount of God."

§ 11.——ONCE more, *compare the Joys which thou shalt have above, with those Foretastes of it which the Spirit hath given thee here.* Hath not God sometimes revealed Himself extraordinarily to thy Soul, and let a Drop of Glory fall upon it? Hast thou not been ready to say, " O that it might be thus with " my Soul continually!" Didst thou never cry out with the *Martyr*, after thy long and mournful Expectations, " *He is come, He is come?*" Didst thou never, under a lively Sermon of Heaven, or in thy retired Contemplations on that blessed State, perceive thy drooping Spirits revive, and thy dejected Heart lift up the Head, and the Light of Heaven dawn on thy Soul? Think with thyself, " What is this " Earnest to the full Inheritance? Alas, all this " Light that so amazeth and rejoiceth me, is but a

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" Candle lighted from Heaven, to lead me thither " through this World of Darkneſs! If ſome godly " Men have been overwhelmed with Joy, till they " have cried out, *Hold, Lord, ſtay thy Hand; I can* " *bear no more:* What then will be my Joys in Hea- " ven, when my Soul ſhall be ſo capable of ſeeing " and enjoying God, that though the Light be ten " thouſand Times greater than the Sun, yet my " Eyes ſhall be able for ever to behold it?" Or if thou haſt not yet felt theſe ſweet Foretaſtes, (for every Believer hath not felt them) then make uſe of ſuch Delights as thou haſt felt, in order the better to diſcern what thou ſhalt hereafter feel.

§ 12. (II) *I am now to ſhew how heavenly Contemplation may be preſerved from a wandering Heart.* Our chief Work is here to diſcover the Danger, and that will direct to the fitteſt Remedy. The Heart will prove the greateſt Hinderance in this heavenly Employment; either,——*by Backwardneſs to it*;——or, by *trifling in it*;——or, *by frequent Excurſions to other Objects*;——or, *by abruptly ending the Work before it is well begun.* As you value the Comfort of this Work, theſe dangerous Evils muſt be faithfully reſiſted.

§ 13. (1) *Thou wilt find thy Heart as backward to this, I think, as to any Work in the World.* O what Excuſes will it make! What Evaſions will it find out! What Delays and Demurs, when it is ever ſo much convinced! Either it will queſtion, whether it be a Duty or not; or, if it be ſo to others, whether to thyſelf. It will tell thee, " This is a Work for " Miniſters that have nothing elſe to ſtudy; or for " Perſons that have more Leiſure than thou haſt." If thou be a Miniſter, it will tell thee, " This is the " Duty of the People; it is enough for thee to medi-

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"tate for their Instruction, and let them meditate on "what they have heard." As if it was thy Duty only to cook their Meat, and serve it up, and they alone must eat it, digest it, and live upon it. If all this will not do, thy Heart will tell thee of other Business, or set thee upon some other Duty; for it had rather go to any Duty than this. Perhaps it will tell thee, "Other Duties are greater, and therefore "this must give Place to them, because thou hast no "Time for both. Publick Business is more impor-"tant; to study and preach for the saving of Souls, "must be preferred before these private Contempla-"tions." As if thou hadst not Time to care for thy own Salvation, for looking after that of others. Or thy Charity to others were so great, that it obliges thee to neglect thy own eternal Welfare. Or as if there were any better Way to fit us to be useful to others, than making this Proof of our Doctrine ourselves. Certainly Heaven is the best Fire to light our Candle at, and the best Book for a Preacher to study; and if we would be persuaded to study that more, the Church would be provided with more heavenly Lights; and when our Studies are divine, and our Spirits divine, our Preaching will also be divine, and we may be called *Divines* indeed.—— Or, if thy Heart have nothing to say against the Work, it will trifle away the Time in Delays, and promise this Day, and the next, but still keep off from the Business.——Or, it will give thee a flat Denial, and oppose its own Unwillingness to thy Reason. All this I speak of the Heart, so far as it is still carnal; for I know, so far as it is spiritual, it will judge this the sweetest Work in the World.

§ 14. WHAT is now to be done? Wilt thou do it, if I tell thee? Wouldst thou not say in a like Case, "What

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" What should I do with a Servant that will not " work? or with a Horse that will not travel? Shall " I keep them to look at?" Then faithfully deal thus with thy Heart; persuade it to the Work, take no Denial, chide it for its Backwardness, use Violence with it. Hast thou no Command of thy own Thoughts? Is not the Subject of thy Meditations a Matter of Choice, especially under this Conduct of thy Judgment? Surely God gave thee, with thy new Nature, some Power to govern thy Thoughts. Art thou again become a Slave to thy depraved Nature? Resume thy Authority. Call in the Spirit of Christ to thine Assistance, who is never backward to so good a Work, nor will deny His Help in so just a Cause. Say to Him, " Lord, thou gavest my Reason the " Command of my Thoughts and Affections; the " Authority I have received over them is from thee; " and now behold, they refuse to obey thine Autho- " rity: Thou commandest me to set them to the " Work of heavenly Meditation, but they rebel, and " stubbornly refuse the Duty. Wilt thou not assist " me to exercise that Authority which thou hast given " me? O send down thy Spirit, that I may enforce " thy Commands, and effectually compel them to " obey thy Will!" Thus thou shalt see thy Heart will submit, its Resistance be overcome, and its Backwardness be turned into chearful Compliance.

§ 15. (2) *Thy Heart will also be likely to betray thee by trifling, when it should be effectually meditating.* Perhaps when thou hast an Hour for Meditation, the Time will be spent before thy Heart will be serious. This doing of Duty, as if we did it not, ruins as many as the Omission of it. Here let thine Eye be always upon thy Heart. Look not so much to the Time it spends in the Duty, as to the Quantity and Quality

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Quality of the Work that is done. You can tell by his Work, whether a Servant hath been diligent. Ask yourself, "What Affections have been yet exercised? "How much am I yet got nearer to Heaven?" Think not, since thy Heart is so trifling, it is better to let it alone: For, by this Means, thou wilt certainly banish all spiritual Obedience; because the best Hearts, being but sanctified in Part, will resist, so far as they are carnal. But rather consider well the Corruption of thy Nature; and that its sinful Indispositions will not supersede the Commands of God, nor one Sin excuse for another; and that God has appointed Means to excite our Affections. This Self-reasoning, Self-considering Duty of heavenly Meditation, is the most singular Means, both to excite and increase Love. Therefore stay not from the Duty, till thou feelest thy Love constrain thee; any more than thou wouldst stay from the Fire, till thou feelest thyself warm; but engage in the Work, till Love is excited, and then Love will constrain thee to further Duty.

§ 16. (3) *Thy Heart will also be making Excursions from thy heavenly Meditation to other Objects.* It will be turning aside, like a careless Servant, to talk with every one that passeth by. When there should be nothing in thy Mind but Heaven, it will be thinking of thy Calling, or thy Afflictions, or of every Bird, or Tree, or Place thou seest. The Cure is here the same as before; use Watchfulness and Violence. Say to thy Heart, "What, did I come hither to "think of my worldly Business, of Persons, Places, "News, or Vanity, or of any Thing but Heaven, "be it ever so good? *Canst thou not watch one Hour?* "Wouldst thou leave this World, and dwell for ever "with Christ in Heaven, and not leave it one Hour "to dwell with Christ in Meditation? *Is this thy* "*Love*

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" *Love to thy Friend?* Doſt thou love Chriſt, and the " Place of thy eternal, bleſſed Abode, no more than " this?" If *the* ravening *Fouls* of wandering Thoughts devour the Meditations intended for Heaven, they devour the Life and Joy of thy Thoughts: Therefore *drive them away* from thy Sacrifice, and ſtrictly keep thy Heart to the Work.

§ 17. (4) *Abruptly ending thy Meditation before it is well begun, is another Way in which thy Heart will deceive thee.* Thou mayſt eaſily perceive this in other Duties. In *ſecret Prayer*, is not thy Heart urging thee to cut it ſhort, and frequently making a Motion to have done? So in *heavenly Contemplation*, thy Heart will be weary of the Work, and will ſtop thy heavenly Walk before thou art well warm. But charge it in the Name of God to ſtay, and not do ſo great a Work by Halves. Say to it, " Fooliſh " Heart! if thou beg a while, and goeſt away before " thou haſt thy Alms, is not thy Begging a loſt La- " bour? If thou ſtoppeſt before the End of thy Jour- " ney, is not thy Travel loſt? Thou cameſt hither " in Hope to have a Sight of the Glory which thou " muſt inherit; and wilt thou ſtop when thou art " almoſt at the Top of the Hill, and turn back be- " fore thou haſt taken thy Survey? Thou cameſt " hither in Hope to ſpeak with God, and wilt thou " go before thou haſt ſeen Him? Thou cameſt to " bathe thyſelf in the Streams of Conſolation, and " to that End didſt uncloath thyſelf of thy earthly " Thoughts, and wilt thou only touch the Bank, " and return? Thou cameſt to *ſpy out the Land of* " *Promiſe*; go not back without *one Cluſter of Grapes*, " *to ſhew thy Brethren* for their Encouragement. Let " them ſee that thou haſt taſted of the Wine, by the " Gladneſs of thy Heart; and that thou haſt been " anointed with the Oil, by the Chearfulneſs of thy " Coun-

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'Countenance; and haſt fed of the Milk and Honey,
'by the Mildneſs of thy Diſpoſition, and the Sweet-
'neſs of thy Converſation. This heavenly Fire
'would melt thy frozen Heart, and refine and ſpi-
'ritualize it; but it muſt have Time to operate."
Thus purſue the Work till ſomething be done, till thy Graces be in Exerciſe, thy Affections raiſed, and thy Soul refreſhed with the Delights above; or if thou canſt not obtain theſe Ends at once, be the more earneſt at another Time. *Bleſſed is that Servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, ſhall find ſo doing.*

CHAP.

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CHAP. XVI.

Heavenly Contemplation exemplified, and the whole Work concluded.

§ 1. *The Reader's Attention excited to the following Example of Meditation.* § 2. *'The Excellencies of 'heavenly Rest';* § 3. *its Nearness,* § 4. *dreadful 'to Sinners,* § 5. *and joyful to Saints;* § 6. *its 'dear Purchase;* § 7. *its Difference from Earth.* '§ 8. *The Heart pleaded with.* § 9. *Unbelief ba-'nished.* § 10. *A careless World pitied.* § 11—13. *'Heavenly Rest the Object of Love,* § 14—21. *and 'Joy.* § 22. *The Heart's Backwardness to heavenly 'Joy lamented.* § 23—27. *Heavenly Rest the Object 'of Desire.'* § 28. *Such Meditation as this urged upon the Reader:* § 29. *The Mischief of neglecting it:* § 30. *The Happiness of pursuing it.* § 31. *The Author's concluding Prayer for the Success of his Work.*

§ 1. AND now, *Reader*, according to the above Directions, make Conscience of *daily exercising thy Graces in Meditation*, as well as *Prayer:* Retire into some *secret Place*, at a *Time the most convenient* to thyself, and *laying aside all worldly Thoughts, with all possible Seriousness and Reverence*, look up toward *Heaven*, remember there is thine *everlasting Rest*, study its *Excellency* and *Reality*, and rise from *Sense to Faith*, by *comparing heavenly with earthly Joys:* Then mix *Ejaculations* with thy *Soliloquies*; till having *pleaded* the Case reverently with *God*, and seriously with

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with thy own *Heart*, thou haſt pleaded thyſelf from a *Clod* to a *Flame*, from a *forgetful Sinner*, and a *Lover of the World*, to an ardent *Lover of God*, from a *fearful Coward* to a *reſolved Chriſtian*, from an *unfruitful Sadneſs* to a *joyful Life:* In a Word, till thou haſt pleaded thy Heart from *Earth* to *Heaven*, from *converſing below* to *walking with God*; and till thou canſt lay thy Heart to reſt, as in the Boſom of Chriſt, by ſome ſuch *Meditation* of thy *everlaſting Reſt* as is here added for thy Aſſiſtance.

§ 2. ‘ *Reſt!* How ſweet the Sound! It is Melody ‘ to my Ears! It lies as a reviving Cordial at my ‘ Heart, and from thence ſends forth lively Spi- ‘ rits, which beat through all the Pulſes of my Soul! ‘ Reſt, Not as the Stone that reſts on the Earth, nor ‘ as this Fleſh ſhall reſt in the Grave, nor ſuch a Reſt ‘ as the carnal World deſires. O bleſſed Reſt! When ‘ we *reſt not Day and Night, ſaying, Holy, holy, holy ‘ Lord God Almighty!* When we ſhall reſt from Sin, ‘ but not from Worſhip; from Suffering and Sorrow, ‘ but not from Joy! O bleſſed Day! When I ſhall ‘ reſt with God! When I ſhall reſt in the Boſom of ‘ my Lord! When I ſhall reſt in knowing, loving, ‘ rejoicing, and praiſing! When my perfect Soul ‘ and Body ſhall together perfectly enjoy the moſt ‘ perfect God! When God, *who is Love* itſelf, ſhall ‘ perfectly love me, and *reſt in His Love* to me, as I ‘ ſhall reſt in my Love to Him; and *rejoice over me ‘ with Joy*, and *joy over me with Singing*, as I ſhall ‘ rejoice in Him!’

§ 3. ‘ How near is that moſt bleſſed, joyful Day! ‘ It comes apace. *He that ſhall come will come, and ‘ will not tarry.* Though *my Lord* ſeems to *delay His ‘ coming*, yet *a little while* and He will be here. ‘ What is a few hundred Years, when they are over? ‘ How ſurely will *His Sign appear?* How ſuddenly ‘ will

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'will He seize upon the careless World, even *as the Lightening cometh out of the East, and shineth unto the West?* He who is gone hence *shall so come.* Methinks I hear His *Trumpet sound!* Methinks I *see Him coming with Clouds*, with His attending Angels in Majesty and in Glory!'

§ 4. 'O secure *Sinners!* What now will you do? Where will you *hide yourselves?* What shall *cover* you? *Mountains* are gone; *the Heavens and the Earth which were*, are *passed away*; the devouring Fire hath consumed all, except yourselves, who must be the Fuel for ever. O that you could consume as soon as the Earth; and *melt* away as did *the Heavens!* Ah, these Wishes are now but vain! The *Lamb* Himself would have been your Friend; He would have loved you, and ruled you, and now have saved you; but you would not *then*, and *now* it is too late. Never cry, *Lord, Lord*; too late, too late, *Man.* Why dost thou look about? Can any save thee? Whither dost thou run? Can any hide thee? O Wretch, that hast brought thyself to this!'

§ 5. 'Now *blessed Saints*, that have believed and obeyed! This is the End of Faith and Patience. This is it for which you prayed and waited. Do you now repent your Sufferings and Sorrows, your Self-denying and holy walking? Are your Tears of Repentance now bitter or sweet? See how the *Judge* smiles upon you; there is Love in His Looks; the Titles of *Redeemer*, *Husband*, *Head*, are written in His amiable, shining Face. Hark, He calls you; He bids you stand here *on His right Hand*; fear not, for there *He sets His Sheep.* O joyful Sentence! *Come, ye Blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World.* He takes you by the Hand, the Door is

'open,

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open, the Kingdom is His, and therefore yours; there is your Place before His Throne; the Father receives you as the Spouse of His Son, and bids you welcome to the Crown of Glory. Ever so unworthy, you must be crowned. This was the Project of free redeeming Grace, the Purpose of eternal Love. O blessed Grace! O blessed Love! O how Love and Joy will rise! But I cannot express it, I cannot conceive it.'

§ 6. 'THIS is that Joy which was procured by Sorrow, that Crown which was procured by the Cross. My Lord *wept*, that now my *Tears might be wiped away*; He bled, that I might now rejoice; He was *forsaken*, that I might not now be forsook; He then *died*, *that I might* now *live*. O free Mercy, that can exalt so vile a Wretch! Free to me, tho' dear to Christ! Free Grace, that hath chosen me, when thousands were forsaken! When my Companions in Sin must burn in Hell, I must here rejoice in *Rest!* Here must I live with all these *Saints!* O comfortable Meeting of my old Acquaintance, with whom I prayed, and wept, and suffered, and *spoke often* of this Day and Place! I see the Grave could not detain you; the same Love hath redeemed and saved you also."

§ 7. 'THIS is not like our Cottages of Clay, our Prisons, our earthly Dwellings. This Voice of Joy is not like our old Complaints, our impatient Groans and Sighs; nor this melodious Praise like the Scoffs and Revilings, or the Oaths and Curses, which we heard on Earth. This Body is not like that we had, nor this Soul like the Soul we had, nor this Life like the Life we lived. We have changed our *Place* and *State*, our *Cloaths* and *Thoughts*, our *Look*, *Language*, and *Company*. *Before*, a *Saint* was weak and despised; so proud and peevish, we

'could

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'could often ſcarce diſcern his Graces: But *now* 'how glorious a Thing is a *Saint!* Where is now 'their Body of Sin, which wearied themſelves and 'thoſe about them? Where are now our different 'Judgments, reproachful Names, divided Spirits, ex-'aſperated Paſſions, ſtrange Looks, uncharitable 'Cenſures? Now we are all of one *Judgment*, of 'one *Name*, of one *Heart*, *Houſe*, and *Glory*. O 'ſweet Reconciliation! Happy Union! Now the 'Goſpel ſhall no more be diſhonoured through our 'Folly. No more, my Soul, ſhalt thou lament the 'Sufferings of the Saints, or the Church's Ruins, 'nor mourn thy ſuffering Friends, nor weep over 'their dying Beds, or their Graves. Thou ſhalt 'never ſuffer thy old Temptations from Satan, the 'World, or thy own Fleſh. Thy Pains and Sick-'neſſes are all cured; thy Body ſhall no more burthen 'thee with Weakneſs and Wearineſs; thy aching 'Head and Heart, thy Hunger and Thirſt, thy Sleep 'and Labour, are all gone. O what a mighty 'Change is this! From the Dunghill, to the Throne! 'From perſecuting Sinners, to praiſing Saints! From 'a *vile Body*, to this which *ſhines as the Brightneſs of* 'the Firmament! From a Senſe of God's Diſpleaſure, 'to the perfect Enjoyment of Him in Love! From 'all my Doubts and Fears, to this Poſſeſſion, which 'puts me out of Doubt! From all my fearful Thoughts 'of Death, to this joyful Life! Bleſſed Change! 'Farewel Sin and Sorrow for ever: Farewel my 'rocky, proud, unbelieving Heart; my worldly, 'ſenſual, carnal Heart: And welcome now my moſt 'holy, heavenly Nature. Farewel Repentance, Faith, 'and Hope; and welcome Love, and Joy, and Praiſe. 'I ſhall now have my Harveſt, without ploughing 'or ſowing; my Joy without a Preacher, or a Pro-'miſe; even all from the Face of God Himſelf.

'What-

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'Whatever Mixture is in the Streams, there is no-
'thing but pure Joy in the Fountain. Here shall I be
'encircled with Eternity, and ever live, and ever, ever
'praise the Lord. My Face will not wrinkle, nor
'my Hair be grey; *for this corruptible* shall have *put*
'*on Incorruption, and this mortal Immortality*, and
'*Death* shall be *swallowed up in Victory. O Death,*
'*where is* now *thy Sting? O Grave, where is thy Vic-*
'*tory?* The Date of my Lease will no more expire,
'nor shall I trouble myself with Thoughts of Death,
'nor lose my Joys through Fear of losing them.
'When Millions of Ages are pass'd, my Glory is
'but beginning; and when Millions more are pass'd,
'it is no nearer ending. Every Day is all Noon,
'every Month is Harvest, every Year is a Jubilee,
'every Age is full Manhood, and all this is one
'Eternity. O blessed Eternity! The Glory of my
'Glory! The Perfection of my Perfection!'

§ 8. 'Ah drowsy, earthly *Heart!* How coldly
'dost thou think of this reviving Day? Hadst thou
'rather sit down in Dirt, than walk in the Palace of
'God? Art thou now remembering thy worldly
'Business, or thinking of thy Lusts, earthly Delights,
'and merry Company? Is it better to be here, than
'above with God? Is the Company better? Are the
'Pleasures greater? Come away; make no Excuse,
'nor Delay; God commands, and I command thee;
'gird up thy Loins; ascend the *Mount*; look about
'thee with *Faith* and *Seriousness*. Look not back
'upon the Way of the Wilderness; except it be to
'*compare* the Kingdom with that howling Desert,
'more sensibly to perceive the wide Difference. Yon-
'der is thy Father's Glory; yonder, O my Soul!
'must thou remove, when thou departest from this
'Body; and when the Power of thy Lord hath raised
'it again, and joined thee to it, yonder must thou

'live

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'live with God for ever. There is the glorious *new* '*Jerusalem*, the Gates of Pearl, the Foundations 'of Pearl, the Streets and Pavement of transparent 'Gold. That Sun, which lighteth all this World, 'will be useless there; even thyself shalt be as bright 'as yonder shining Sun; God will be the Sun, 'and Christ the Light, and in His Light shalt thou 'have Light.'

§ 9. 'O MY Soul! dost thou *stagger at the Pro-* '*mise of God through Unbelief?* I much suspect thee. 'Didst thou believe indeed, thou wouldst be more 'affected with it. Is it not under the Hand, and Seal, 'and Oath of God? Can God lie? Can He that is 'Truth itself be false? What need hath God to flatter 'or deceive thee? Why should He promise thee more 'than He will perform? Dare not to charge the 'wise, almighty, faithful God with this. How many 'of the Promises have been performed to thee in thy 'Conversion? Would God so powerfully concur 'with a feigned Word? O wretched Heart of Un-'belief! Hath God made thee a Promise of *Rest*, and 'wilt thou come short of it? Thine Eyes, thy Ears, 'and all thy Senses, may prove Delusions, sooner 'than a Promise of God can delude thee. Thou 'mayst be surer of that which is written in the Word, 'than if thou see it with thine Eyes, or feel it with 'thine Hands. Art thou sure thou art alive, or that 'this is Earth thou standest on, or that thine Eyes 'see the Sun? As sure is all this Glory to the *Saints*; 'as sure shall I be higher than yonder Stars, and live 'for ever in the *holy City*, and joyfully sound forth 'the Praise of my Redeemer; if I be not shut out 'by this *evil Heart of Unbelief*, causing me to *depart* '*from the living God.*'

§ 10. 'AND is this *Rest* so sweet, and so sure? 'Then what means the careless World? Know they

'what

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'what they neglect? Did they ever hear of it, or 'are they yet asleep, or are they dead? Do they 'certainly know that the Crown is before them, 'while they thus sit still, or follow Trifles? Un-'doubtedly they are beside themselves, to mind so 'much their Provision by the Way, when they are 'hasting so fast to another World, and their eternal 'Happiness lies at stake. Were there left one Spark 'of *Reason*, they would never sell their *Rest* for Toil, 'nor their Glory for worldly Vanities, nor venture '*Heaven* for sinful Pleasure. *Poor Men!* O that you 'would once consider what you hazard, and then 'you would scorn these tempting Baits! Blessed for 'ever be that Love, which hath rescued me from this 'bewitching Darkness!'

§ 11. 'DRAW yet nearer, O my Soul! with thy 'most fervent *Love*. Here is Matter for it to work 'upon, something worth thy loving. O see what '*Beauty* presents itself! Is not all the Beauty in the 'World united here? Is not all other Beauty but 'Deformity? Dost thou now need to be persuaded to 'love? Here is a *Feast* for thine Eyes, and all the 'Powers of thy Soul; dost thou need Entreaties to feed 'upon it? Canst thou love a little shining Earth, a 'walking Piece of Clay? And canst thou not love 'that *God*, that *Christ*, that *Glory*, which is so truly 'and unmeasurably lovely? Thou canst love thy '*Friend*, because he loves thee; and is the Love of 'thy Friend like the Love of Christ? Their weep-'ing or bleeding for thee, do not ease thee, nor stay 'the Course of thy Tears or Blood: But the Tears 'and Blood that fell from thy Lord, have a sovereign 'healing Virtue.——O my Soul! if Love *deserves*, 'and should beget Love, what incomprehensible 'Love is here before thee? Pour out all the Store of 'thy Affections here, and all is too little. O that it

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'were more! O that it were many thousand Times 'more! Let Him be first served, that served thee 'first. Let Him have the First-born, and Strength 'of thy Soul, who parted with Strength and Life in 'love for thee.——O my Soul! Dost thou love for '*Excellency?* Yonder is the Region of Light; this 'is a Land of Darkness. Yonder twinkling *Stars*, 'that shining *Moon*, and radiant *Sun*, are all but 'Lanthorns hung out of thy Father's House, to light 'thee while thou walkest in this dark World: But 'how little dost thou know the Glory and Blessedness 'that is within?——Dost thou love for *Suitableness?* 'What Person more suitable than Christ? His *God-'head* and *Humanity*, His *Fulness* and *Freeness*, His '*Willingness* and *Constancy*, all proclaim Him thy 'most suitable Friend. What State more suitable to 'thy Misery, than Mercy? Or to thy Sin and Pol-'lution, than Honour and Perfection? What Place 'more suitable to thee than Heaven? Does this 'World agree with thy Desires? Hast thou not had 'a sufficient Trial of it?——Or dost thou love for '*Interest* and *near Relation?* Where hast thou better 'Interest than in Heaven, or nearer Relation than 'there?'

§ 12.——'Dost thou love for *Acquaintance* and '*Familiarity?* Tho' thine Eyes have never seen thy 'Lord, yet thou hast heard His Voice, received His 'Benefits, and lived in His Bosom; He taught thee 'to know thyself and Him; He opened thee that first 'Window through which thou sawest into Heaven. 'Hast thou forgotten since thy Heart was careless, 'and He awakened it; hard, and He softened it; 'stubborn, and He made it yield; at Peace, and He 'troubled it; whole, and He broke it; and broken, 'till He healed it again? Hast thou forgotten the 'Times, when He found thee in Tears; when He

'heard

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ard thy secret Sighs and Groans, and left all to me and comfort thee; when He took thee, as it ere, in His Arms, and asked thee, 'Poor Soul, hat ails thee? Dost thou weep, when I have vept so much? Be of good Chear; thy Wounds re saving, and not deadly; it is I have made hem, who mean thee no Hurt; tho' I let out thy Blood, I will not let out thy Life.' I remember lis Voice. How gently did He take me up? How arefully did he dress my Wounds? Methinks I hear Him still saying to me, 'Poor Sinner, tho' thou hast dealt unkindly with me, and cast me off; yet I will not do so by thee. Tho' thou hast set light by me and all my Mercies, yet they and myself are All thine. What wouldst thou have, that I can give thee? And what dost thou want, that I cannot give thee? If any Thing I have will please thee, thou shalt have it. Wouldst thou have Pardon? I freely forgive thee all the Debt. Wouldst thou have Grace and Peace? Thou shalt have them both. Wouldst thou have Myself? Behold I am thine, thy *Friend*, thy *Lord*, thy *Brother*, *Husband*, and *Head*. Wouldst thou have the Father? I will bring thee to Him, and thou shalt have Him, in and by Me.' These were my Lord's reviving Words. After all, when I was doubtful of His Love, methinks I yet remember His overcoming Arguments. 'Have I done so much, *Sinner*, to testify my Love, and yet dost thou doubt? Have I offered thee Myself and Love so long, and yet dost thou question my Willingness to be thine? At what dearer Rate should I tell thee that I love thee? Wilt thou not believe my *bitter Passion* proceeded from Love? Have I made Myself in the Gospel a Lion to thine Enemies, and a Lamb to thee, and dost thou overlook My Lamb-like

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" Nature? Had I been willing to let thee perish, " what need I have done and suffered so much? " What need I follow thee with such Patience and " Importunity? Why dost thou tell me of thy " Wants; have I not enough for Me and thee? Or " of thy Unworthiness; for if thou wast thyself " worthy, what shouldst thou do with my Worthi- " ness?. Did I ever invite, or save, the *Worthy* and " the *Righteous*; or is there any such *upon Earth?* " Hast thou nothing; art thou lost and miserable, " helpless and forlorn? Dost thou believe I am an " All-sufficient Saviour, and wouldst thou have me? " Lo, I am thine, take me; if thou art willing, I " am; and neither Sin, nor Satan, shall break the " Match.' These, O these, were the blessed Words ' which His Spirit from His Gospel spoke unto me, ' till He made me cast myself at His Feet, and cry ' out, ' My Saviour, and my Lord, thou hast broke, " thou hast revived my Heart; thou hast overcome, " thou hast won my Heart; take it, it is thine; if " such a Heart can please thee, take it; if it cannot, " make it such as thou wouldst have it.' Thus, O ' my Soul! mayst thou remember the sweet Famili- ' arity thou hast had with Christ; therefore, if Ac- ' quaintance will cause Affection, let out thy Heart ' unto Him. It is He hath stood by thy Bed of Sick- ' ness, hath eased thy Pains, refreshed thy Weariness, ' and removed thy Fears. He hath been always ready, ' when thou hast earnestly sought Him; hath met ' thee in publick and private; hath been found of ' thee in the Congregation, in thy House, in thy ' Closet, in the Field, in thy waking Nights, in thy ' deepest Dangers.'

§ 13. ' If *Bounty* and *Compassion* be an Attractive ' of Love, how unmeasurably then am I bound to ' love Him? All the Mercies that have filled up my ' Life,

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ſe, all the Places that ever I abode in, all the cieties and Perſons I have been converſant with, l my Employments and Relations, every Condi- on I have been in, and every Change I have paſſed ıro', all tell me, that the Fountain is *overflowing Goodneſs*. Lord, what a Sum of Love am I indebted o thee? And how does my Debt continually in- reaſe? How ſhould I love again for ſo much Love? But ſhall I dare to think of requiting thee, or of recompenſing all thy Love with mine? Will my Mite requite thee for thy golden Mines; my ſel- dom Wiſhes, for thy conſtant Bounty; mine which is nothing, or not mine, for thine which is infi- nite and thine own? Shall I dare to contend in Love with thee; or ſet my borrowed languid Spark againſt the Sun of Love? Can I love as high, as deep, as broad, as long, as Love itſelf; as much as He that made me, and that made me love, and gave me all that little which I have? As I cannot match thee in the Works of Power, nor make, nor preſerve, nor rule the Worlds; no more can I match thee in Love. No, Lord, I yield; I am overcome. O bleſſed Conqueſt! Go on victori- ouſly, and ſtill prevail, and triumph in thy Love. The Captive of Love ſhall proclaim thy Victory; when thou leadeſt me in Triumph from Earth to Heaven, from Death to Life, from the Tribunal to the Throne; myſelf, and all that ſee it, ſhall acknowledge thou haſt prevailed, and all ſhall ſay, *Behold how He loved him!* Yet let me love in Sub- jection to thy Love; as thy redeemed Captive, tho' not thy Peer. Shall I not love at all, becauſe I cannot reach thy Meaſure? O that I could feel- ingly ſay, *I love thee*, even as I love my Friend, and myſelf! Though I cannot ſay, as the *Apoſtle*, *Thou knoweſt that I love thee*; yet I can ſay, Lord,

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'thou knoweſt that I would love thee. I am angry 'with my Heart, that it doth not love thee; I chide 'it, yet it doth not mend; I reaſon with it, and 'would fain perſuade it, yet I do not perceive it ſtir; 'I rub and chafe it in the Uſe of thy Ordinances, 'and yet I feel it not warm within me. Unworthy 'Soul! Is not thine Eye now upon the only lovely 'Object? Art thou not beholding the raviſhing 'Glory of the Saints? And doſt thou not love? Art 'thou not a rational Soul, and ſhould not Reaſon 'tell thee, that Earth is a Dungeon to the celeſtial 'Glory? Art thou not thyſelf a Spirit, and ſhouldſt 'thou not love God, *who is a Spirit, and the Father 'of Spirits?* Why doſt thou love ſo much thy 'periſhing Clay, and love no more the heavenly 'Glory? Shalt thou love when thou comeſt there; 'when the Lord ſhall take thy Carcaſe from the 'Grave, and make thee ſhine as the Sun in Glory 'for ever and ever; ſhalt thou then love, or ſhalt 'thou not? Is not the Place a Meeting of Lovers? 'Is not the Life a State of Love? Is it not the great 'Marriage Day of the Lamb? Is not the Employ-'ment there the Work of Love, where the Souls 'with Chriſt take their Fill? O then, my Soul, 'begin it here! Be *ſick of Love* now, that thou mayſt 'be well with Love there. *Keep thyſelf* now *in the 'Love of God*; and let *neither Life, nor Death, nor 'any Thing ſeparate thee from it*; and thou ſhalt be 'kept in the Fulneſs of Love for ever, and nothing 'ſhall imbitter or abate thy Pleaſure; for the Lord 'hath prepared a City of Love, a Place for commu-'nicating Love to his choſen, *and they that love His 'Name ſhall dwell therein.*'

§ 14. 'AWAKE then, O my drowſy Soul! To 'ſleep under the Light of Grace is unreaſonable, 'much more in the Approach of the Light of Glory.

'Come

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ome forth, my dull congealed Spirit, thy Lord
ds thee *rejoice, and again rejoice.* Thou haſt lain
ng enough in thy Priſon of Fleſh, where Satan
ath been thy Jailor, Cares have been thy Irons,
ears thy Scourges, and thy Food the Bread and
Water of Affliction; where Sorrows have been thy
Lodging, and thy Sins and Foes have made the
Bed, and an unbelieving Heart hath been the
Gates and Bars that have kept thee in: The Angel
of the Covenant now calls thee, and ſtrikes thee,
and bids thee, *ariſe and follow him.* Up, O my
Soul! and chearfully obey, and thy Bolts and Bars
ſhall all fly open; *follow the Lamb whitherſoever He goeth.* Shouldſt thou fear to follow ſuch a Guide?
Can the Sun lead thee to a State of Darkneſs? Will
He lead thee to Death, who died to ſave thee from
it? Follow Him, and He will ſhew thee *the Paradiſe of God*; He will give thee a Sight of the *new Jeruſalem*, and a Taſte of *the Tree of Life.* Come
forth, my drooping Soul, and lay aſide thy Winter-
Dreſs; let it be ſeen by thy *Garments of Joy and Praiſe*, that the Spring is come; and as thou now
ſeeſt thy Comforts green, thou ſhalt ſhortly ſee
them *white and ripe for Harveſt*, and then thou
ſhalt be called to reap, and gather, and take Poſ-
ſeſſion. Should I ſuſpend and delay my Joys till
then? Should not the Joys of the Spring go before
the Joys of Harveſt? Is Title nothing before Poſ-
ſeſſion? Is the Heir in no better a State than a
Slave? My Lord hath taught me to *rejoice in Hope of His Glory*; and how to ſee it through the Bars of
a Priſon; for *when I am perſecuted for Righteouſneſs Sake*, He commands me to *rejoice, and be exceeding glad*, becauſe *my Reward in Heaven is great.* I
know He would have my Joys exceed my Sorrows;
and as much as He delights in *the Humble and Con-*

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'*trite*, He yet more delights in the Soul that *delights* '*in Him.* Hath my Lord ſpread me a Table in this 'Wilderneſs, and furniſhed it with the Promiſes of 'everlaſting Glory, and ſet before me Angels Food? 'Doth He frequently and importunately invite me to 'ſit down, and feed, and ſpare not? Hath He, to 'that End, furniſhed me with Reaſon, and Faith, 'and a joyful Diſpoſition; and is it poſſible that He 'ſhould be unwilling to have me rejoice? Is it not 'His Command, to *delight thyſelf in the Lord*; and 'His Promiſe, to *give thee the Deſires of thine Heart?* 'Art thou not charged, to *rejoice evermore*; yea, to '*ſing aloud, and ſhout, for Joy?* Why ſhould I then 'be diſcouraged? My God is willing, if I were but 'willing. He is delighted in my Delights. He 'would have it my conſtant Frame, and daily Buſi-'neſs, to be near Him in my believing *Medita-'tions*, and to live in the ſweeteſt Thoughts of his 'Goodneſs. O bleſſed Employment, fit for the 'Sons of God! But thy Feaſt, my Lord, is nothing 'to me without an Appetite: Thou haſt ſet the 'Dainties of Heaven before me; but, alas! I am 'blind, and cannot ſee them; I am ſick, and can-'not reliſh them; I am ſo benumbed, that I cannot 'put forth a Hand to take them. I therefore humbly 'beg this Grace, that as thou haſt opened Heaven to 'me in thy Word, ſo thou wouldſt *open mine Eyes to 'ſee* it, and my Heart to delight in it; elſe Heaven 'will be no Heaven to me. O thou Spirit of Life, 'breath upon thy Graces in me; take me by the 'Hand, and lift me from Earth, that I may ſee 'what Glory *thou haſt prepared for them that love 'thee!*'

§ 15. 'AWAY then, ye Soul tormenting Cares 'and Fears, ye Heart vexing Sorrows: At leaſt for-'bear a little while; ſtand by; ſtay here below, till I

'go

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'go up, and see my *Rest*. The Way is strange to 'me, but not to Christ. There was the eternal 'Abode of His glorious Deity; and thither hath He 'also brought His glorified Flesh. It was His Work 'to purchase it; it is His to prepare it, and to pre-'pare me for it, and bring me to it. The eternal 'God of Truth hath given me His Promise, His 'Seal, and Oath, '*that, believing in Christ, I shall 'not perish, but have everlasting Life.* Thither shall 'my Soul be speedily removed, and my Body very 'shortly follow. And can my Tongue say, that I 'shall shortly and surely live with God; and yet my 'Heart not leap within me? Can I say it with Faith, 'and not with Joy? Ah Faith, how sensibly do I 'now perceive thy Weakness! But tho' Unbelief 'darken my Light, and dull my Life, and suppress 'my Joys, it shall not be able to conquer and de-'stroy me; though it envy all my Comforts, yet 'some in spight of it I shall even here receive; and 'if that did not hinder, what Abundance might I 'have? The Light of Heaven would shine into 'my Heart; and I might be almost as familiar there, 'as I am on Earth. Come away then, my Soul; 'stop thine Ears to the ignorant Language of Infide-'lity; thou art able to answer all its Arguments; 'or if thou art not, yet tread them under thy Feet. 'Come away; stand not looking on that Grave, nor 'turning those Bones, nor reading thy Lesson now 'in the Dust; those Lines will soon be wiped out. 'But lift up thy Head, and look to Heaven, and see 'thy *Name* in golden Letters *written before the Foun-'dation of the World, in the Book of Life of the Lamb 'that was slain.* What if an Angel should tell thee, 'that there is a Mansion in Heaven prepared for 'thee, that it shall certainly be thine for ever; would 'not such a Message make thee glad? And dost

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'thou make light of the infallible Word of Promise,
'which was delivered by the Spirit, and even by the
'Son Himself? Suppose thou hadst seen *a fiery*
'*Chariot* come for thee, and fetch thee up to Hea-
'ven, like *Elijah*; would not this rejoice thee?
'But thy Lord assures thee, that the Soul of a *Laza-*
'*rus* hath a Convoy of *Angels* to *carry* it *into Abra-*
'*ham's Bosom.* Shall a Drunkard be so merry among
'his Cups, or the Glutton in his delicious Fare, and
'shall not I rejoice who must shortly be in Heaven?
'Can Meat and Drink delight me when I hunger
'and thirst; can I find Pleasure in Walks, and Gar-
'dens, and convenient Dwellings; can beautiful
'Objects delight mine Eyes; or grateful Odours my
'Smell; or Melody my Ears; and shall not the Fore-
'thought of celestial Bliss delight me? Methinks
'among my Books I could employ myself in sweet
'Content, and bid the World farewel, and pity
'the Rich and the Great that know not this Happi-
'ness; what then will my Happiness in Heaven be,
'where my Knowledge will be perfect? If *the Queen*
'*of Sheba came from the utmost Parts of the Earth to*
'*hear the Wisdom of Solomon*, and see his Glory; how
'chearfully should I pass from Earth to Heaven, to
'see the Glory of the eternal Majesty, and attain
'the Height of Wisdom; compared with which the
'most Learned on Earth are but Fools and Idiots?
'What if God had made me Commander of the Earth;
'what if I could *remove Mountains*, *heal Diseases*
'*with a Word or a Touch*, or *cast out Devils*; should
'I not rejoice in such Privileges and Honours as
'these; and shall I not much more *rejoice that* my
'Name is written in Heaven? I cannot here enjoy
'my Parents, or my near and beloved Friends, with-
'out some Delight; especially when I did freely let-
'out my Affection to my Friend, how sweet was
'that

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'that Exercise of my Love! O what will it then be 'to live in the perpetual Love of God! *For Brethren 'to dwell together in Unity* here, *how good and how 'pleasant is it!* To see a Family live in Love, Husband and Wife, Parents, Children and Servants, 'doing all in Love to one another; to see a Town 'live together in Love, without any Envyings, 'Brawlings or Contentions, Law-Suits, Factions or 'Divisions, but every Man loving his Neighbour as 'himself, thinking they can never do too much for 'one another, but striving to go beyond each other 'in Love; how happy, how delightful a Sight is 'this! O then, what a blessed Society will the Family of Heaven be, and those peaceful Inhabitants 'of the *new Jerusalem*, where there is no Division, 'nor differing Judgments, no Disaffection nor 'Strangeness, no deceitful Friendship, no, not one 'unkind Expression, nor an angry Look or Thought; 'but *all are one in Christ*, who is one with the Father, 'and all live in the Love of Him, who is Love itself! 'The Soul is not more where it lives, than where 'it loves. How near then will my Soul be united to 'God, when I shall so heartily, strongly, and incessantly love Him! Ah wretched, unbelieving 'Heart, that can think of such a Day, and Work, 'and Life as this, with such low and feeble Joys! 'But my future enjoying Joys will be more lively.'

§ 16. 'How delightful is it to me to behold and 'study these inferior *Works of Creation?* What a 'beautiful Fabrick do we here dwell in; the Floor so 'dress'd with Herbs, and Flowers, and Trees, and 'watered with Springs and Rivers; the Roof so wide 'expanded, so admirably adorned! What Wonders 'do Sun, Moon, and Stars, Seas, and Winds, contain! And hath God prepared such a House for 'corruptible Flesh, for a Soul imprisoned; and doth

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'He beſtow ſo many Millions of Wonders upon His 'Enemies! O what a Dwelling muſt that be, which 'He prepares for His dearly beloved Children; and 'how will the Glory of the *new Jeruſalem* exceed all 'the preſent Glory of the Creatures? Ariſe then, 'O my Soul, in thy Contemplation; and let thy 'Thoughts of that Glory as far exceed in Sweetneſs 'thy Thoughts of the Excellencies below! Fear 'not to go out of this Body, and this World, when 'thou muſt make ſo happy a Change; but ſay, as *one* 'did when he was dying, "I am glad, and even "leap for Joy, that the Time is come in which that "mighty *Jehovah*, whoſe Majeſty in my Search of "Nature I have admired, whoſe Goodneſs I have "adored, whom by Faith I have deſired and panted "after, will now ſhew Himſelf to me Face to "Face."

§ 17. 'How wonderful alſo are the *Works of Pro-* 'vidence? How delightful to ſee the Great God 'intereſt Himſelf in the Safety and Advancement of 'of a few humble, praying, but deſpiſed Perſons; 'and to review thoſe ſpecial Mercies with which my 'own Life hath been adorned and ſweetened? How 'often have my Prayers been heard, my Tears re- 'garded, my troubled Soul relieved? How often 'hath my Lord bid me *be of good Chear?* What a 'Support are theſe Experiences, theſe clear Teſti- 'monies of my Father's Love, to my fearful un- 'believing Heart? O then, what a bleſſed Day will 'that be, when I ſhall have all Mercy, Perfection 'of Mercy, and fully enjoy the Lord of Mercy; 'when I ſhall ſtand on the Shore, and look back on 'the raging Seas I have ſafely paſſed; when I ſhall 'review my Pains and Sorrows, my Fears and Tears, 'and poſſeſs the Glory which was the End of all? 'If one Drop of lively Faith was mixed with theſe

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'Considerations, what a Heaven-ravishing Heart 'should I carry within me? Fain would *I believe*; '*Lord, help my Unbelief.*'

§ 18. 'How sweet, O my Soul, have *Ordi-* 'nances been to thee? What Delight hast thou had 'in Prayer, and Thanksgiving, under heavenly Ser- 'mons, and in the Society of Saints, and to see *the* '*Lord adding to the Church such as should be saved?* 'How can my Heart then conceive the Joy, which 'I shall have to see the perfected Church in Heaven, 'and to be admitted into the celestial Temple, and 'with the heavenly Host praise the Lord for ever? 'If the *Word of God* was sweeter to *Job* than *his ne-* 'cessary Food; and to *David, than Honey and the* '*Honey-Comb*; and *was the Joy and rejoicing of Jere-* 'miah's *Heart*; how blessed a Day will that be, 'when we fully enjoy the Lord of this Word, and 'shall no more need these written Precepts and Pro- 'mises, nor read any Book but the Face of the glo- 'rious God? If they that heard Christ speak on 'Earth, *were astonished at His Wisdom and Answers,* 'and *wondered at the gracious Words which proceeded* 'out of His Mouth; how shall I then be affected to 'behold Him in His Majesty?'

§ 19. 'CAN the Prospect of this Glory make 'others *welcome the Cross*, and even refuse Delive- 'rance; and cannot it make thee chearful under lesser 'Sufferings? Can it sweeten the Flames of Martyr- 'dom; and not sweeten thy Life, or thy Sickness, 'or thy natural Death? Is it not the same Heaven 'which they and I must live in? Is not their God, 'their Christ, their Crown, and mine the same? 'And shall I look upon it with an Eye so dim, a 'Heart so dull, a Countenance so dejected? Some 'small Foretastes of it have I myself had; and how 'much more delightful have they been, than any

'earthly

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'earthly Things ever were; and what then will the 'full Enjoyment be?'

§ 20. 'WHAT a Beauty is there here in the *imperfect Graces of the Spirit?* Alas! how small are 'these, to what we shall enjoy in our perfect State? 'What a happy Life should I here live, could I but 'love God as much as I would; could I be all Love, 'and always loving? O my Soul! what wouldst 'thou give for such a Life? Had I such Apprehen'sions of God, such Knowledge of His Word as I 'desire; could I fully trust Him in all my Straits; 'could I be as lively as I would in every Duty; 'could I make God my constant Desire and Delight; 'I would not envy the World their Honours or Plea'sures. What a blessed State, O my Soul! wilt 'thou shortly be in, when thou shalt have far more 'of these than thou canst now desire, and shalt exer'cise thy perfected Graces in the immediate Vi'sion of God, and not in the Dark, and at a Dis'tance, as now?'

§ 21. 'Is the sinning, afflicted, persecuted *Church of Christ*, so much more excellent than any parti'cular gracious Soul? What then will the Church 'be, when it is fully gathered and glorified; when 'it is ascended from the Valley of Tears to *Mount Sion*; when it shall sin and suffer no more! The 'Glory of the *old Jerusalem* will be Darkness and 'Deformity to the Glory of the *new*. What Cause 'shall we have then to shout for Joy, when we 'shall see how glorious the heavenly Temple is, and 'remember the Meanness of the Church on Earth?'

[N. B. *If this Chapter seem too long to be read at once, it may be properly divided here.*]

§ 22. 'BUT alas! what a Loss am I at in the 'Midst of my *Contemplations?* I thought my *Heart* 'had all the while attended, but I see it doth not.

'What

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'What Life is there in empty Thoughts and Words, 'without Affections? Neither God, nor I, find 'Pleasure in them. Where hast thou been, *unworthy* 'Heart, while I was opening to thee the everlasting 'Treasures? Art thou not ashamed to complain so 'much of an uncomfortable Life, and to murmur at 'God for filling thee with Sorrows; when He in 'vain offers thee the Delights of Angels? Hadst 'thou now but followed me close, it would have 'made thee revive and leap for Joy, and forget thy 'Pains and Sorrows. Did I think my Heart had 'been so backward to rejoice?'

§ 23. 'LORD, thou hast reserved my perfect Joys 'for Heaven; therefore, help me to *desire* till I may 'possess, and let me long when I cannot, as I would, 'rejoice. O my Soul, thou knowest to thy Sorrow, 'that thou art not yet at thy *Rest*. When shall I 'arrive at that safe and quiet Harbour, where there 'are none of these Storms, Waves, and Dangers; 'when I shall never more have a weary restless 'Night or Day! Then my Life will not be such 'a Mixture of Hope and Fear, of Joy and Sorrow; 'nor shall Flesh and Spirit be combating within me; 'nor Faith and Unbelief, Humility and Pride, main-'tain a continual Conflict. O when shall I be past 'these Soul-tormenting Fears, and Cares, and Griefs? 'When shall I be out of this Soul-contradicting, 'ensnaring, deceitful Flesh; this corruptible Body, 'this vain, vexatious World! Alas, that I must 'stand and see the Church and Cause of Christ tos'd 'about in Contention, and made subservient to pri-'vate Interests, or deluded Fancies! There is none 'of this Disorder in the heavenly *Jerusalem*; there I 'shall find an harmonious Consent of perfected Spirits, 'in obeying and praising their everlasting King. O 'how much better to be *a Door-Keeper* there, than 'the Commander of this tumultuous World? Why

'am

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'am I no more weary of this Weariness? Why do
'I so forget my *resting Place?* Up then, O my
'Soul, in thy most raised and fervent *Desires!* Stay
'not till this Flesh can desire with thee; expect not that
'Sense should apprehend thy blessed Object, and tell
'thee when and what to desire. Doth not the Dul-
'ness of thy Desires after *Rest*, accuse thee of most
'detestable Ingratitude and Folly? Must thy Lord
'procure thee a *Rest* at so dear a Rate, and dost thou
'no more value it? Must He go before to prepare so
'glorious a Mansion for such a Wretch, and art thou
'loth to go and possess it? Shall the Lord of Glory
'be desirous of thy Company, and thou not desirous
'of His? Must Earth become a very Hell to thee,
'before thou art willing to be with God? Behold
'the most lovely Creature, or the most desirable
'State, and tell me, where wouldst thou be, if not
'with God? Poverty is a Burthen; Riches a Snare;
'Sickness unpleasing; Health unsafe; the frowning
'World *bruises thy Heel*; the smiling World *stings*
'thee to the Heart; so much as the World is loved
'and delighted in, it hurts and endangers the Lover;
'and if it may not be loved, why should it be desired?
'If thou art applauded, it proves the most contagious
'Breath; if thou art vilify'd, or unkindly used, me-
'thinks this should not entice thy Love. If thy suc-
'cessful Labours, and thy godly Friends, seem better
'to thee than a Life with God, it is Time for God
'to take them from thee. If thy Studies have been
'sweet; have they not also been bitter? And,
'at best, what are they to the everlasting Views of
'the God of Truth? Thy Friends here have been
'thy Delight; and have they not also been thy Vexa-
'tion and Grief? They are gracious, and are they
'not also sinful? They are kind, and are they not
'soon displeased? They are humble, but, alas, how

'proud

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'proud alſo? Their Graces are ſweet, and their 'Gifts helpful; but are not their Corruptions bitter, 'and their Imperfections hurtful? And art thou ſo 'loth to go from them to thy God?'

§ 24. 'O MY Soul, look above this World of 'Sorrows! Haſt thou ſo long felt the ſmarting Rod 'of Affliction, and no better underſtood its Mean-'ing? Is not every Stroke to drive thee hence? Is 'not its Voice like that to *Elijah*, *what doſt thou here?* 'Doſt thou forget thy Lord's Prediction, *In the World 'ye ſhall have Tribulation, in me ye may have Peace.* 'Ah! my dear Lord, I feel thy Meaning; it is 'written in my Fleſh, engraved in my Bones. My 'Heart thou aimeſt at; thy Rod drives, thy ſilken 'Cord of Love draws; and all to bring it to thyſelf. 'Lord, Can ſuch a Heart be worth thy having? 'Make it worthy, and then it is thine; take it to 'thyſelf, and then take me. This Clod hath Life to 'ſtir, but not to riſe. As the feeble Child to the 'tender Mother, it looketh up to thee, and ſtretch-'eth out the Hands, and fain would have thee take 'it up. Tho' I cannot ſay, *my Soul longeth after 'thee*; yet I can ſay, I long for ſuch a longing 'Heart. *The Spirit is willing, the Fleſh is weak.* My 'Spirit cries, *let thy Kingdom come*, or let me come 'to thy Kingdom; but the Fleſh is afraid thou 'ſhouldſt hear my Prayer, and take me at my Word. 'O bleſſed be thy Grace, which makes Uſe of my 'Corruptions to kill themſelves; for I fear my Fears, 'and ſorrow for my Sorrows, and long for greater 'Longings; and thus the painful Means of attaining 'my Deſires increaſe my Wearineſs, and that makes 'me groan to be at *reſt*.'

§ 25. 'INDEED, Lord, my Soul itſelf is *in a 'Strait*, and *what to chuſe I know not*; but thou 'knoweſt what to give: *To depart, and be with thee,*

'*is*

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'*is far better.* But *to abide in the Flesh* seems *needful.* 'Thou knowest I am not weary of thy Work, but 'of Sorrow and Sin; I am willing to stay while thou 'wilt employ me, and dispatch the Work thou hast 'put into my Hands: But, I beseech thee, stay no 'longer when this is done; and while I must be 'here, let me be still amending and ascending; 'make me still better, and take me at the best. I 'dare not be so impatient, as to importune thee to 'cut off my Time, and snatch me hence unready; 'because I know my everlasting State so much de-'pends on the Improvement of this Life. Nor 'would I stay when my Work is done; and remain 'here sinning, while my Brethren are triumphing. 'Thy Footsteps bruise this Worm, while those Stars 'shine in the Firmament of Glory. Yet I am thy 'Child as well as they; Christ is my Head as well as 'theirs; why is there then so great a Distance? But 'I acknowledge the Equity of thy Ways; though we 'are all Children, yet I am the Prodigal, and there-'fore more fit in this remote Country to *feed on Husks*, 'while they are *always with thee*, and possess thy 'Glory. They were once themselves in my Con-'dition, and I shall shortly be in theirs. They were 'of the lowest Form, before they came to the highest; 'they *suffered*, before they *reigned*; they *came out of* 'great *Tribulation*, *who are* now *before thy Throne*; 'and shall not I be content to come to the Crown as 'they did; and to *drink of their Cup*, before I *sit* '*with them in the Kingdom?* Lord, I am content to 'stay thy Time, and go thy Way, so thou wilt exalt 'me also in thy Season, and take me *into thy Barn* 'when thou seest me ripe. In the mean Time I 'may desire, tho' I am not to repine; I may believe 'and wish, tho' not make any sinful Haste: I am 'willing to wait for thee, but not to lose thee; and

'when

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n-thou seeſt me too contented with thine Ab-
e, then quicken my languid Deſires, and blow
he dying Spark of Love; and leave me not
I am able unfeignedly to cry out, *As the Hart*
teth *after the Water-Brooks, ſo panteth my Soul*
er *thee, O God. My Soul thirſteth for God, for*
living God; when ſhall I come and appear before
od? *My Converſation is in Heaven, from whence*
look for a Saviour. My Affections are ſet on Things
bove, where Chriſt ſitteth, and my Life is hid. I
walk by Faith, and not by Sight; willing rather to be
abſent from the Body, and preſent with the Lord.'

§ 26. 'WHAT Intereſt hath this empty World
in me; and what is there in it that may ſeem ſo
lovely, as to entice my *Deſires* from my God, or
make me loth to come away? Methinks, when I
look upon it with a deliberate Eye, it is a howling
Wilderneſs, and too many of its Inhabitants are
untamed Monſters; I can view all its Beauty as
Deformity; and drown all its Pleaſures in a few
penitent Tears; or the Wind of a Sigh will ſcatter
them away. O let not this Fleſh ſo ſeduce my
Soul, as to make it prefer this weary Life before the
Joys that are about thy Throne! And tho' Death
itſelf be unwelcome to Nature, yet let thy Grace
make thy Glory appear to me ſo deſirable, that the
King of Terrors may be the Meſſenger of my Joy!
Let not my Soul be ejected by Violence, and diſ-
poſſeſſed of its Habitation againſt its Will; but
draw it to thyſelf by the ſecret Power of thy Love,
as the Sun-ſhine in the Spring draws forth the Crea-
tures from their Winter-Cells; meet it half Way,
and entice it to thee, as the Load-Stone doth the
Iron, and as the greater Flame attracts the leſs!
Diſpel therefore the Clouds that hide thy Love from
me; or remove the Scales that hinder mine Eyes
fr

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'from beholding thee; for the Beams that ſtream 'from thy Face, and the Fore-taſte of thy great Sal- 'vation, and nothing elſe, can make a Soul un- 'feignedly ſay, *now let thy Servant depart in Peace!* 'But it is not thy ordinary Diſcoveries that will here 'ſuffice; as the Work is greater, ſo muſt thy Help 'be. O turn theſe Fears into ſtrong Deſires, and 'this Lothneſs to die into Longings after thee! 'While I muſt be abſent from thee, let my Soul as 'heartily groan, as my Body doth under its Want of 'Health! If I have any more Time to ſpend on 'Earth, let me live, as without the World, in thee, 'as I have ſometime lived as *without thee in the World!* 'While I have a Thought to think, let me not for- 'get thee; or a Tongue to move, let me mention 'thee with Delight; or a Breath to breathe, let it be 'after thee, and for thee; or a Knee to bend, let 'it daily bow at thy Footſtool; and when by Sick- 'neſs thou confineſt me, do thou *make my Bed, 'number my Pains, and put all my Tears into thy 'Bottle!*'

§ 27. 'As my Fleſh deſired what my Spirit ab- 'horred, ſo now let my Spirit deſire that Day which 'my Fleſh abhorreth; that my Friends may not 'with ſo much Sorrow wait for the Departure of my 'Soul, as my Soul with Joy ſhall wait for its own 'Departure! Then *let me die the Death of the Righ- 'teous, and let my laſt End be like his*; even a Remo- 'val to that Glory that ſhall never end! Then let 'thy Convoy of Angels bring my departing Soul 'among *the perfected Spirits of the Juſt*, and let me 'follow my dear Friends that have died *in Chriſt 'before me*; and while my ſorrowing Friends are 'weeping over my Grave, let my Spirit be repoſed 'with thee in *Reſt*; and while my Corps ſhall lie 'rotting in the Dark, let my Soul be in *the Inheri-*

'*tance*

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'tance of the Saints in Light! O thou that *numberest* 'the very Hairs of my Head, number all the Days 'that my Body lies in the Duſt; and thou that *writeſt* 'all my Members in thy Book, keep an Account of my 'ſcattered Bones! O my Saviour, haſten the Time 'of thy Return; *ſend forth thy Angels*, and let that 'dreadful, joyful *Trumpet ſound!* Delay not, leſt 'the Living give up their Hopes; delay not, leſt 'Earth ſhould grow like Hell, and thy Church by 'Diviſion be all crumbled to Duſt; delay not, leſt 'thy Enemies get Advantage of thy Flock, and leſt 'Pride, Hypocriſy, Senſuality, and Unbelief pre-'vail againſt thy *little Remnant*, and ſhare among 'them thy whole Inheritance, and *when thou comeſt* 'thou *find* not *Faith on the Earth*; delay not, leſt the 'Grave ſhould boaſt of Victory, and having learned 'Rebellion of its Gueſt, ſhould refuſe to deliver thee 'up thy Due! O haſten that great Reſurrection-'Day, when thy Command ſhall go forth, and none 'ſhall diſobey; when *the Sea and Earth ſhall yield up* 'their Hoſtages *and all that ſleep in the Grave ſhall* 'awake, *and the Dead in Chriſt ſhall riſe firſt*; when 'the *Seed* which thou ſowedſt *corruptible*, *ſhall* come 'forth *incorruptible*; and Graves that received Rot-'tenneſs and Duſt, ſhall return thee glorious Stars 'and Suns! Therefore dare I lay down my Carcaſe 'in the Duſt, intruſting it, not to a Grave, but to 'thee; and *therefore my Fleſh ſhall reſt in Hope*, till 'thou ſhalt raiſe it to the Poſſeſſion of *everlaſting Reſt*. 'Return, O Lord, *how long?* O *let thy Kingdom* 'come! Thy deſolate *Bride ſaith*, *Come*; for thy 'Spirit within her *ſaith*, *Come*; and teacheth her 'thus to *pray with Groanings which cannot be uttered*; 'yea, *the whole Creation* ſaith, Come, *waiting to be* 'delivered *from the Bondage of Corruption*, *into the* 'glorious *Liberty of the Children of God*; thou thyſelf

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'haſt *ſaid*, *Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even ſo,* '*Come Lord Jeſus!*'

§ 28. THUS, *Reader*, I have given thee my beſt Advice for maintaining a heavenly Converſation. If thou canſt not thus meditate methodically and fully, yet do it as thou canſt; only be ſure to do it ſeriouſly and frequently. Be acquainted with this heavenly Work, and thou wilt, in ſome Degree, be acquainted with God; thy Joys will be ſpiritual, prevalent, and laſting, according to the Nature of their bleſſed Object; thou wilt have Comfort in Life and Death: When thou haſt neither Wealth, nor Health, nor the Pleaſure of this World, yet wilt thou have Comfort: Without the Preſence, or Help of any Friend, without a Miniſter, without a Book, when all Means are denied thee, or taken from thee, yet mayſt thou have vigorous, real Comfort. Thy Graces will be mighty, active, and victorious; and the daily *Joy* which is thus fetch'd from Heaven *will be thy Strength*. Thou wilt be as one that ſtands on the Top of an exceeding high Mountain; he looks down on the World as if it were quite below him; Fields and Woods, Cities and Towns, ſeem to him but little Spots. Thus deſpicably wilt thou look on all Things here below. The greateſt Princes will ſeem but as Graſhoppers; the buſy, contentious, covetous World, but as a Heap of Ants. Men's Threatenings will be no Terror to thee; nor the Honours of this World any ſtrong Enticement; Temptations will be more harmleſs, as having loſt their Strength; and Afflictions leſs grievous, as having loſt their Sting; and every Mercy will be better known, and reliſhed. It is now, under God, in thy own Choice, whether thou wilt live this bleſſed Life or not; and whether all this Pains I have taken for thee ſhall

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prosper, or be lost. If it be lost thro' thy Laziness, thou thyself wilt prove the greatest Loser. O *Man!* What hast thou to mind but God and Heaven? Art thou not almost out of this World already? Dost thou not look every Day, when one Disease or other will let-out thy Soul? Does not *the Grave wait to be thine House*; and Worms to feed upon thy Face and Heart? What if thy Pulse must beat a few Strokes more? What if thou hast a little longer to breathe, before thou breathe out thy last; a few more Nights to sleep, before thou sleepest in the Dust? Alas! what will this be, when it is gone? And is it not almost gone already? Very shortly thou wilt see thy Glass run out, and say to thyself, "My Life is done! My Time is gone! "'Tis past recalling! There's nothing now but Hea- "ven or Hell before me!" Where then should thy Heart be now, but in Heaven? Didst thou know what a dreadful Thing it is, to have a Doubt of Heaven when a Man is dying, it would rouze thee up. And what else but doubt can that Man then do, that never seriously thought of Heaven before?

§ 29. SOME there be that say, "It is not worth "so much Time and Trouble, to think of the Great- "ness of the Joys above; so that we can make sure "they are ours, we know they are great." But as these Men obey not the Command of God, which requires them to have *their Conversation in Heaven*, and to *set their Affections on Things above*; so they wilfully make their own Lives miserable, by refusing the Delights which God hath set before them. And if this were all, it were a small Matter; but see what Abundance of other *Mischiefs* follow the Neglect of these heavenly Delights. This Neglect—*will damp, if not destroy, their Love to God*;——*will make it unpleasant to them to think or speak of God*, or *engage in His*

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His Service;——it tends to pervert their Judgments concerning the Ways and Ordinances of God;——it makes them ſenſual and voluptuous;——it leaves them under the Power of every Affliction and Temptation, and is a Preparative to total Apoſtacy;——it will alſo make them fearful and unwilling to die. For who would go to a God, or a Place, he hath no Delight in? Who would leave his Pleaſure here, if he had not better to go to? Had I only propoſed a Courſe of Melancholy and Fear, and Sorrow, you might reaſonably have objected. But you muſt have heavenly Delights, or none that are laſting. God is willing you ſhould daily walk with Him, and fetch in Conſolations from the everlaſting Fountain; if you are unwilling, even bear the Loſs; and when you are dying, ſeek for Comfort where you can get it, and ſee whether fleſhly Delights will remain with you; then Conſcience will remember, in Spight of you, that you was once perſuaded to a Way for more excellent Pleaſures, Pleaſures that would have followed you thro' Death, and have laſted to Eternity.

§ 30. As for you, whoſe Hearts God hath weaned from all Things here below, I hope you will value this heavenly Life, and take one Walk every Day in the *new Jeruſalem*. God is your Love, and your Deſire; you would fain be more acquainted with your Saviour; and I know it is your Grief, that your Hearts are not nearer to Him, and that they do not more feelingly love Him, and delight in Him. O try this Life of Meditation on your heavenly Reſt! Here is the *Mount*, on which the fluctuating *Ark* of your Souls may reſt. Let the World ſee by your heavenly Lives, that Religion is ſomething more than Opinions and Diſputes, or a Taſk of outward Duties. If ever a *Chriſtian* is like himſelf, and anſwerable to his Principles and Profeſſion, it is when he is moſt ſerious

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ſerious and lively in this Duty. As *Moſes*, before he died, went up into Mount *Nebo*, to take a Survey of the Land of *Canaan*; ſo the Chriſtian aſcends this Mount of Contemplation, and by Faith ſurveys his Reſt. He looks upon the glorious Manſions, and ſays, "*Glorious Things are* deſervedly *ſpoken of thee, "thou City of God!*" He hears, as it were, the Melody of the heavenly Choir, and ſays, "*Happy "is the People that are in ſuch a Caſe; yea, happy is that "People, whoſe God is the Lord!*" He looks upon the glorified Inhabitants, and ſays, "*Happy art thou, "O Iſrael; who is like unto thee, O People ſaved by the "Lord, the Shield of thy Help, and who is the Sword of "thine Excellency!*" When he looks upon the Lord Himſelf, who is their Glory, he is ready with the reſt, to *fall down and worſhip Him that liveth for ever and ever*, and *ſay*, "*Holy, holy, holy Lord God Al-"mighty, which was, and is, and is to come! Thou "art worthy, O Lord, to receive Glory, and Honour, "and Power!*" When he looks on the glorified Saviour, he is ready to ſay, *Amen*, to that *new Song*, "*Bleſſing, and Honour, and Glory, and Power, be unto "Him that ſitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb for "ever and ever: For thou waſt ſlain, and haſt redeemed us "to God by thy Blood, out of every Kindred, and Tongue, "and People, and Nation; and haſt made us unto our God "Kings and Prieſts!*" When he looks back on the Wilderneſs of this World, he bleſſes the believing, patient, deſpiſed Saints; he pities the ignorant, obſtinate, miſerable World; and for himſelf, he ſays, as *Peter*, "*It is good to be here;*" or as *Aſaph*, "*It is "good for me to draw near to God; for lo, they that are "far from thee, ſhall periſh.*" Thus, as *Daniel* in his Captivity daily opened his Window toward *Jeruſalem*, though far out of Sight, when he went to God in his

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Devotions; so may the believing Soul in this Captivity of the Flesh, look towards *Jerusalem which is above:* And as *Paul* was to the *Colossians*, so may the Believer be with the glorified Spirits, *tho' absent in the Flesh, yet with them in the Spirit, joying and beholding their* heavenly *Order.* And as the Lark sweetly sings, while she soars on high, but is suddenly silenced when she falls to the Earth; so is the Frame of the Soul most delightful and divine, while it keeps in the Views of God by Contemplation: Alas, we make there too short a Stay, fall down again, and lay by our Musick!

§ 31. BUT, " O thou, the merciful Father of " Spirits, the Attractive of Love, and Ocean of De- " lights, draw up these drossy Hearts unto thyself, " and keep them there till they are spiritualized and " refined; and second thy Servant's weak Endeavours, " and persuade those that read these Lines to the " Practice of this delightful, heavenly Work! O " suffer not the Soul of thy most unworthy Servant " to be a Stranger to those Joys, which he describes " to others; but keep me, while I remain on Earth, " in daily Breathings after thee, and in a believing, " affectionate Walking with thee! And when thou " comest, let me be found so doing; not serving my " Flesh, nor asleep with my Lamp unfurnished; but " waiting and longing for my Lord's Return! Let " those who shall read these heavenly Directions, " not merely read the Fruit of my Studies; but " the Breathings of my active Hope and Love: " That, if my Heart were open to their View, " they might there read the same most deeply en- " graven with a Beam from the Face of the Son of " God; and not find *Vanity*, or *Lust*, or *Pride* " within, when the *Words of Life* appear without;

" that

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that ſo theſe Lines may not witneſs againſt me; but, proceeding from the Heart of the *Writer*, may be effectual, through thy Grace, upon the Heart of the *Reader*, and ſo be the Savour of Life to both! *Amen.*"

Glory be to God in the higheſt; on Earth Peace; Good Will towards Men.

F I N I S.

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